VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities ISSUE 13, SEPTEMBER 2025

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.



RURAL HEARTBEAT - 13:

LEARNINGS FROM BEYOND BOARDERS

Greetings from CIRDAP again. In September, I was fortunate to be part of Michigan State University's International Experts Study Visit Program to MSU. Michigan, USA on invitation. The event brought together representatives from Taiwan, Kenya, India and CIRDAP, representing Asian and Pacific countries which are working for farmers. It was a fantastic learning curve, diving into MSU's Agriculture and rural development work-we presented country papers, toured research stations, labs, extension centers, farmers' markets, and even visited and interacted with practicing farmers besides learning about activities and opportunities with MSU.



Visited the Okemos farmers' market: an interesting community-driven spot backed by MSU, where local farmers sell fresh fruits,

veggies, fish, meat, handicrafts, baked goods, and more-plus entertainment with live agriculture themed music! Urban folks flock there for direct-from-farmer produce, keeping rural passion alive. The system promotes local production for local consumption where consumers get fresh farm produce from markets straight from farmers for a reasonable price where there are no intermediaries. The system is also transforming the farmers as Agripreneurs. Visit to Taylor Shoemaker's home-based farm-she's this young trailblazer teaching school kids and city dwellers Agriculture while growing and selling fresh produce through her own mini-market within the farm. She has her own primary processing and storage. Her self-sufficient setup is perfect inspiration for our Asian-Pacific farmers.

Back home, CIRDAP has launched a Project Facilitation Center to connect CIRDAP experts and partners with project funding opportunities through an institutional platform with a win win mechanism. Plus, we have rolled out Artificial Intelligence training for daily operations of CIRDAP for its employees, and signed new MOUs with National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan, Non-Aligned Movement Center for South-South Technical Cooperation based at Jakarta, Indonesia, Bangladesh Sustainable and Renewable Energy Association and Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio Resources (ANSAB), Nepal. More partnerships are coming.

Learning from all directions and partnerships in all sectors to reach rural communities better

With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara Director General, CIRDAP

Strengthening Global Partnerships: DG CIRDAP's Visit to Michigan State University, USA

The Director General of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, undertook a study visit to Michigan State University (MSU), East Lansing, Michigan, USA, from 21 to 27 September 2025, at the invitation of the International Programs in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU.

The visit aimed to explore future collaboration opportunities between CIRDAP and MSU in the fields of agricultural extension, outreach, research, and



rural development. It provided an invaluable platform for engaging with senior administrators, educators, and specialists of MSU's Research and Extension programs across the State of Michigan.



During the visit, Dr. Shekara delivered an insightful presentation on CIRDAP's mission, regional initiatives, and innovative approaches to integrated rural development across Asia and the Pacific. International Experts from Taiwan, India, and Kenya, as well as representatives from the Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), participated in the program representing the Asia and Pacific region.

The programme included interactive sessions and site visits designed to showcase the breadth and

impact of MSU's Extension and Outreach initiatives. The delegation visited the Kellogg Biological Station, where they explored ongoing research on sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship. A visit to Organic Farming sites in West Michigan highlighted innovative practices that promote ecological balance and enhance soil health. At the Small Fruit Research Center, the group learned about advances in fruit production and market - oriented research benefiting local farmers.









The tour also included a visit to the Lake Michigan Tollgate Farm, where participants observed community-based learning and youth engagement in agriculture. The final field exposure in Urban Farming projects in Detroit showcased successful models of food production and community revitalization in urban settings.

The study visit concluded with a comprehensive overview of the Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center, where participants interacted with researchers and local entrepreneurs engaged in commercial farming and agritourism initiatives.





Through this visit, Dr. P. Chandra Shekara reaffirmed CIRDAP's commitment to promoting knowledge partnerships that strengthen rural innovation and agricultural development across its member countries. The engagement with Michigan State University marks a significant step toward fostering global collaboration for sustainable rural transformation.



You Want to Partner: CIRDAP Launches the Project Facilitation Centre

Ready to make your rural development dream a reality by transforming rural ideas into real impact?

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) proudly presents the Project Facilitation Centre (PFC), a forward looking initiative designed to empower and support our network of partners across member countries!

CIRDAP Project
Facilitation Centre
(PFC)

This dynamic platform is your central hub for Collaboration and innovation. We work to ensure that your transformative ideas are turned into impactful actions that drive inclusive and sustainable growth.

The Project Facilitation Centre strengthens your capacity by:

- Unlocking access to global funding opportunities.
- Mobilizing essential resources for your project.
- Streamlining project planning and implementation processes.
- Fostering coordination to enhance rural livelihoods.

Do not let your transformative ideas wait! Submit your project proposal, and we will facilitate it on your behalf with our Development Partners!

Operational Guideline for CIRDAP Project Facilitation Centre (PFC)
Please click the link below:

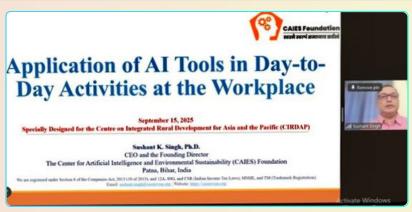
https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/PFC-Operational-Guide_final.pdf

For more information or inquiries, contact us at: director_research@cirdap.org

The

program

Enhancing Workplace Productivity through Artificial Intelligence in CIRDAP



and Founding Director of the Center for Artificial Intelligence and Environmental Sustainability (CAIES) Foundation, India.

and Environmental Sustamability (CALES) Foundation, maia.

focused on enhancing the capacity of

CIRDAP organized an in-house online training session on "Application of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Day-to-Day Activities at the Workplace" on 15 September 2025. Specially designed for CIRDAP faculty and staff, the training was conducted by Dr. Sushant K. Singh, CEO



participants to effectively integrate Artificial Intelligence tools in their daily tasks, thereby improving productivity, decision-making, and workplace innovation.

Building Sustainable Futures Together: CIRDAP Signs MoU with National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Chung Hsing University (NCHU), Taiwan.

This partnership aims to promote integrated rural development, agricultural biotechnology, environmental protection, animal science, and sustainable livelihoods across Asia and the Pacific.

The MoU was signed by H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and Prof. Wen Hsin Chung, Director of the Agricultural Extension Centre, NCHU. The



signing ceremony took place in the presence of Dr. Quinten Taylor, Director of MSU Extension, and



Dr. Karim Maredia, Director of International Programs, MSU Extension at Michigan State University, USA.

Through this collaboration, CIRDAP and NCHU will jointly work on capacity building, technology transfer, research, training, and community empowerment for the benefit of member countries and the wider Asia Pacific region.

CIRDAP Knowledge Series-43

Let Us Reach Out to Rural Innovators:

Webinar on Strengthening Grassroots Rural Innovations by Prof. Anil K. Gupta Founder,
National Innovation Foundation, Ahmedabad, India



CIRDAP successfully hosted its Knowledge Series-43 Webinar on "Strengthening Grassroots Rural Innovations: Experiences, Challenges and Future Road Map" on 1 September 2025, featuring the renowned Prof. Anil K. Gupta – Founder of the Honey Bee Network, SRISTI, GIAN & NIF, and Visiting Faculty at IIMA & IITB. The webinar emphasized how grassroots innovations, rooted in traditional knowledge and local ingenuity, address community challenges with limited resources while improving livelihoods.

Prof. Gupta shared the Honey Bee Network philosophy of crosspollination of ideas, recognizing innovators, protecting IPRs, sharing knowledge back in



local languages, and ensuring fair benefit-sharing - offering a

roadmap for inclusive and sustainable rural development. The event brought together engaged experts and participants from CIRDAP Member Countries. The session was chaired by HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP.

Exploring a Vibrant Model of Farmers' Market in Michigan, USA



H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, recently visited the Okemos Farmers Market in Michigan, USA, a thriving marketplace where around 100 farmers gather every Saturday to sell fresh produce directly to the residents of Lansing.

The market offers a lively and engaging experience, featuring fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, flowers, clothes, and live music, creating

a harmonious atmosphere that celebrates the spirit of agriculture. More than just a marketplace, it serves as a dynamic model of agribusiness as entrepreneurship and stands as an exemplary practice worth replicating in other regions.



CIRDAP extends its sincere gratitude to Michigan State University Extension for organizing this insightful visit, which provided valuable lessons on community-driven rural development and sustainable agricultural practices.

Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya Joins CIRDAP as Director, Research



Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya, PhD in Rural Development from the University of Queensland, Australia, joined CIRDAP as Director, Research effective from 1 September 2025. He hails from Nepal.

Bringing over 30 years of expertise in sustainable agriculture and policy research on rural transformation, climate resilience, and inclusive growth, he has driven evidence-based policies at SAARC Agriculture Centre and Nepal's Ministry of Agriculture.

Dr. Acharya's distinguished career includes authoring SAARC Agriculture Vision 2030, editing the SAARC Journal of Agriculture, coordinating scores of multistakeholder consultation meetings and workshops and contributing to the number of policy documents for agricultural and Rural Development in Nepal and South Asia. Professionally

championing agroecological approaches, gender and social inclusion, green enterprising, climate resilience, and disaster risk management, Dr Achary's research interest focuses on empowering marginalized rural communities, fostering knowledge exchange and delivering actionable solutions to enhance livelihoods and food security across the region.

Dr. Acharya is poised to advance CIRDAP's mission through innovative research and regional partnerships for sustainable rural development in Asia and the Pacific.

Connect with Dr. Acharya to explore potential collaboration with CIRDAP at director research@cirdap.org.

IRD Model -13: Power to the Poor Scheme Empowers Rural Women in the Lao PDR

Access to electricity is transforming lives in northern Laos, empowering women, enhancing productivity, and fostering inclusive rural development. In Bormang Village, BounNeua district, Phongsali province, households once limited by lack of energy now enjoy the benefits of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Northern Power Transmission Project, implemented by Électricité du Laos

(EDL) with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

For Buachanh Souksy of Chingcho village, electricity brought more than light—it brought opportunity. With her family's home connected to the grid in 2016, she gained time for farming, cooking, and childcare, while her children can now study at night. Household appliances such as rice cookers, grinders, and food processors have eased labor-intensive tasks, and her husband can communicate with buyers via his mobile phone, expanding business channels. Ms. Souksy, who belongs to the Akha ethnic group, has even improved



her Lao language skills through TV, enabling her to participate confidently in community meetings.



The \$20 million project extended electricity access to over 24,095 households, including 8,832 poor households in Phongsali, Xaignabouli, and Vientiane provinces. Poor households received free electricity meters, wiring, and no-interest credit of 700,000 kip (\$70), repayable over 35 months, enabling equitable access to energy. Community engagement in collaboration with the Lao Women's Union ensured that vulnerable groups, including women-headed households and ethnic minorities, understood and benefited from the program.

The impacts go beyond convenience: small home-based businesses, increased mobile phone usage (from 67% to 86%), and reduced indoor air pollution reflect the multi-dimensional benefits of electrification.

According to ADB, the project not only improved rural livelihoods but also reinforced regional cooperation and economic growth, allowing Laos to continue exporting electricity to Thailand.

By connecting energy access with economic opportunity, education, and social inclusion, the Northern Power Transmission Project exemplifies Integrated Rural Development, where infrastructure, financial support, and community engagement converge to empower rural populations—especially women—toward sustainable development.

Strengthening South-South Cooperation for Rural Development:
CIRDAP & the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC)
signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)



CIRDAP and the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC) based on Jakarta, Indonesia, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 11 September 2025 to foster collaboration in advancing

rural development and agricultural transformation across Asia and the Pacific. The signing ceremony was addressed by HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and Ambassador HE. Diar Nurbintoro, Director of NAM CSSTC, who highlighted the importance of strengthening partnerships through South-South cooperation.

Through this partnership, both organizations will work together on:

- ✓ Promoting and strengthening agricultural cooperatives and farmers' associations
- ☑ Capacity building and training for farmers, policymakers, and rural communities
- ✓ Joint programmes and projects on rural development and livelihood enhancement
- ✓ Knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and innovation for sustainable agriculture

This MoU marks a new chapter of cooperation to empower rural communities, enhance self-reliance, and promote sustainable livelihoods in member countries.

Solar Power for Future— CIRDAP & Bangladesh Sustainable and Renewable Energy Association (BSREA) Join Hands for Sustainable Rural Energy Development

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and the Bangladesh Sustainable and Renewable Energy Association (BSREA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 7 September 2025, at CIRDAP Headquarters, Dhaka, to foster collaboration on renewable energy and sustainable rural development across the Asia - Pacific region.



The MoU aims to promote decentralized renewable energy solutions, sustainable livelihoods, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives, advancing the shared goals of rural transformation in alignment with SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

The signing ceremony was graced by HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, along with representatives from the organization. From BSREA, President Mr. Mostafa Al Mahmud, Engineer Md. Ataur Rahman Sarker (General Secretary), Zahidul Alam (Vice President), and other board members attended the event.



Both parties emphasized the importance of collaborative action to strengthen rural communities, empower farmers and entrepreneurs, and expand access to affordable clean energy solutions across member countries through successful demonstration of solar family and solar village concept prepared by DG, CIRDAP.

The MoU was signed by Mr. F.A.M. Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP, and Mr. Mostafa Al Mahmud, President, BSREA.

This strategic partnership marks a significant step toward climate resilience, inclusive rural development, and sustainable energy transitions in the Asia-Pacific region.

A Collaborative Step Forward: CIRDAP and Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) BPATC Meeting



CIRDAP had a courtesy meeting with delegates from the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) on September 08, 2025 at CIRDAP Headquarters, Dhaka. It was a pleasure to welcome Ms. Kamrun Nahar, Director, and Mr. Parimal Kumar Roy, Deputy Director, from BPATC. The meeting provided an excellent

opportunity for both organizations to share insights and explore potential areas of future collaboration. Both sides shared presentations on their respective institutions. Director General of

CIRDAP, HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara along with other staff members of CIRDAP also present in the meeting. This engagement marks another step toward strengthening collaboration in capacity building and rural development initiatives.



CIRDAP Strengthens Ties with Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA)

On 8 September 2025, CIRDAP had the honor of hosting a courtesy meeting with the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) at its Dhaka Headquarters.



Mr. Muhammed Ali Armağan, TİKA

Coordinator, accompanied by a representative, engaged in constructive discussions with CIRDAP leadership, including Director General HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, and key staff members.



The meeting focused on exploring potential avenues for collaboration in rural development, knowledge sharing, and capacity-building initiatives. This engagement highlights CIRDAP's commitment to fostering strong international partnerships to promote sustainable and inclusive rural development across the Asia-Pacific region.

CIRDAP Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB), Nepal

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture Bioresources (ANSAB), Nepal. This partnership aims to promote and strengthen agricultural and cooperatives farmers associations, communities, and foster empower rural collaborative efforts in advancing sustainable livelihoods across Asia and the Pacific.



Through this cooperation, both organizations will work together on joint programmes, capacity building, technology transfer, and knowledge exchange to benefit farmers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and rural communities in the region.

CIRDAP and ANSAB are committed to building stronger rural economies and resilient communities through innovation, training, and cooperative action.

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. Tahsina Tabassum Sajuti, Executive Assistant, Research and CIRDAP Email: ea_research@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.





Chameli House The Headquarter of CIRDAP



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