

VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities

ISSUE 17, JANUARY 2026

World Rural Development Day 2026

Towards Vibrant, Prosperous and Happy Rural Communities



CIRDAP

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

Dear Partners, Greetings from CIRDAP

Climate change is happening globally, visible, rapidly threatening food security and hence climate Action must gear up the speed. Science can play a major role in mitigation and Adaptation provided the scientists and Extension functionaries are sensitive to Climate Resilient Agriculture. Hence, sensitizing Scientists and Extension functionaries at the induction stage itself plays important role.

For a young researcher, their biggest impact may come from unlocking, adapting, and scaling what already exists- not just inventing something brand new. Their job only ends when farmers, extension agents, and policymakers understand and act on their findings. Post-research sensitization and translation of the evidence is not an afterthought- it is their core responsibility.



Let us not look for a fragmented solution. Farmers often need complete, field-ready packages of practices that integrate climate-smart technologies. These packages must also include clear contingency plans. Moreover, our research must be risk-sensitive and ensure that every recommendation reduces vulnerability rather than adding new uncertainty.

Climate resilience does not end at the farm gate. Every year, farmers lose a significant share of their harvest not because of low productivity, but because of inadequate storage, poor handling, weak market linkages, and climate-induced disruptions. Climate research must therefore look beyond production and integrate strategies that reduce post-harvest losses, improve storage and processing, strengthen value chains, and prevent market-level waste. Investing in processing is therefore investing in resilience- transforming climate-exposed harvests into climate-secure livelihoods.

By organizing farmers into Cooperatives and FPOs, they reduce individual risk, strengthen bargaining power, and make climate-smart technologies, inputs, and information more accessible and affordable. When farmers move together, resilience stops being an individual struggle and becomes a shared, sustainable pathway. Digital transformation is reshaping entire agri-food system. Technology is giving farmers information and power they never had before. But true climate resilience emerges when these tools are affordable, accessible, and adapted to local realities. For early-career researchers, the challenge is not only to innovate digitally, but to ensure that not widen- the gap between science and smallholders.

Timely and trusted extension support is as important as the research itself. No matter how brilliant their research is, it dies without trusted extension workers. Make sure advice reaches farmers when they need it - not years later.

Help farmers brand and certify their climate-smart products. When the market pays a premium for “climate-resilient”, adaptation stops being a cost and becomes an opportunity.

Let us prepare responsible scientists and extension functionaries who can safe guard the future of everyone especially rural communities

With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara
Director General, CIRDAP

CIRDAP Deliverables for 2026-2027

MONTHLY WEBINARS – 24

APJORD PUBLICATION – 4

RDR PUBLICATION – 1

TC MEETINGS – 2

EC & GC MEETING – 1

PUBLICATION OF BOOKS – 8

RESEARCH PROJECTS – 2

EC & GC MEETING – 1

PUBLICATION OF BOOKS – 8

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES INCLUDING 2 CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE CIRCUIT – 4

CONSULTANCY-SELF-FINANCED TRAINING PROGRAMMES – 1

STUDY VISIT – 1

CIRDAP PROJECT FACILITATION CENTRE – INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY- 15

CIRDAP PROJECT FACILITATION CENTRE – INSTITUTION CATEGORY- 6

ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMME – 5

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE / SEMINARS – 10

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT – 1

DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

As 2026 begins, warm New Year greetings are extended from the CIRDAP Secretariat to all Member Countries and partners across the Asia-Pacific region.

Rural landscapes and the resilience of rural communities remain at the heart of the region's development journey. The past year reflected steady progress through collective efforts, shared learning, and strengthened cooperation in advancing inclusive and sustainable rural development.

The New Year brings renewed opportunities to deepen regional collaboration, promote sustainable livelihoods, and support resilient rural economies. May 2026 be marked by peace, productive harvests, innovation, and thriving rural communities across all Member Countries.



CIRDAP looks forward to continuing its mission of supporting integrated rural development and fostering partnerships that contribute to improved quality of life in rural areas throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

DG, CIRDAP Inspires Young Researchers in India by Highlighting Practical Pathways for Climate-Resilient Agriculture Research

HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General, CIRDAP, addressed as Chief Guest at the inauguration of the International Workshop on “Empowering Early Career Researchers in Advancing Climate-Resilient Agriculture Research and Collaboration” held in Karnataka, India.

The workshop was organized by Keladi Shivappa Nayaka University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga, in collaboration with the Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK, with support from the British Council.



In his address, he encouraged early career researchers to focus on solutions that are practical, inclusive, and grounded in local realities.




He emphasized learning from existing knowledge, working closely with farmers, cooperatives, FPOs, and extension systems, and ensuring that research moves beyond publications to real climate action.

Dr. Shekara highlighted the importance of holistic climate-resilient agriculture packages, post-harvest management, affordable digital solutions, farmer-to-farmer extension, and branding of climate-smart products to turn resilience into income. He also stressed collaboration with startups, government programmes, and the use of social media to scale good practices.

Asia-Pacific Innovators — Your Rural Innovations Deserve Global Recognition!

- Are you part of a transformative rural initiative in the Asia-Pacific?
- Has your innovation uplifted a village, empowered a community, or sparked sustainable change in rural areas?
- Do you know of a rural innovation that has uplifted a village, empowered a community, or sparked transformative change in rural lives?




Calling the innovative solutions in Rural Development from all Change makers from Asia and the Pacific Countries!

 **CIRDAP and REEDS** proudly present the **International Rural Development Innovation Challenge 2026** — a platform to showcase rural innovations from across the Asia-Pacific region. This is your chance to amplify local impact on a global stage.

Challenge Overview

- The challenge seeks impactful innovations addressing rural issues like poverty, inequality, climate change, and limited access to services.
- Participants can include community leaders, NGOs, startups, and individuals from CIRDAP member countries.
- The initiative aims to recognize and reward outstanding innovations that can transform rural livelihoods.

Awards & Recognition:

-  **Top5 Innovations:** USD 500 + Certificate
-  **Next 10 Impactful Ideas:** Certificate of Appreciation
-  Featured in a Book + Invitation to an International Conference

Application Process

- Proposals (up to 5 pages) can be submitted in any language, including high-resolution photos and evidence of impact.
- Include impact evidence, visuals and video byte on proposed innovation
- Please find the brochure containing the details for submitting proposals.

<https://cirdap.org/CIRDAP-International-Rural-Development-Innovation-Challenge-2026-brochure>

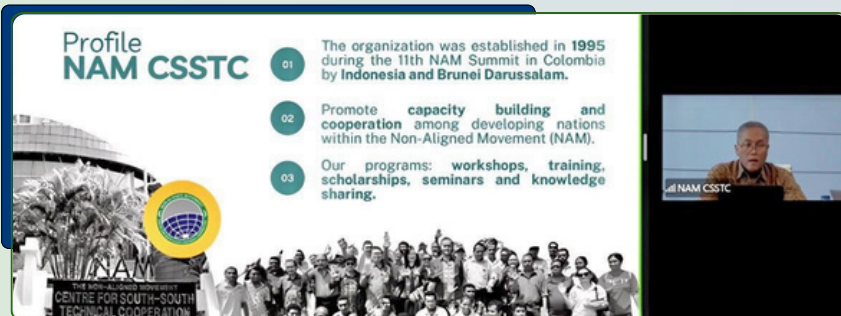
Share your innovation at Email: communication_officer@cirdap.org

WhatsApp: +880 1741 589228

 **Last Date of Submission: 28 February 2026**

Let's celebrate rural wisdom — **One Innovation. Endless Change. Countless Smiles**





CIRDAP successfully kicked off its 2026 Knowledge Series with an insightful webinar titled "Non - Aligned Movement Centre for South - South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC): Key Initiatives and Contributions" on Thursday 15 January 2026.

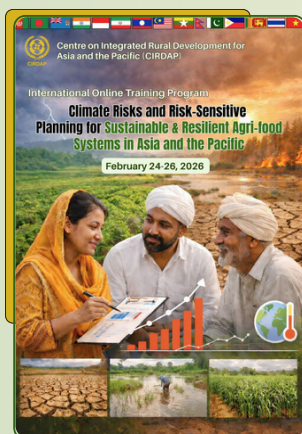
The webinar was graced by Honourable Ambassador Diar Nurbintoro SH MH Director of the Non Aligned Movement Centre for South South Technical Cooperation NAMCSSTC Jakarta Indonesia as the keynote speaker. He was accompanied by Mr Syafi Satya Sakti Assistant Director for Programme NAMCSSTC.

The session highlighted NAM CSSTC's mission to accelerate national development through technical exchange and its vision to strengthen collective self-reliance among developing nations. By focusing on people-centered development, the initiative aims to empower developing countries as equal partners in international relations.

The programme was chaired by His Excellency Dr. P Chandra Shekara Director General of CIRDAP along with experts and participants from CIRDAP Member Countries making the discussion highly interactive and insightful.



International Online Training on Climate Risk-Sensitive Planning for Resilient Agri-food Systems



Climate risks such as floods, droughts, heatwaves, and cyclones are increasingly threatening agriculture and food security across Asia and the Pacific. To address these challenges, CIRDAP is organizing an International Online Training Programme on Climate Risks and Risk-Sensitive Planning for Sustainable & Resilient Agri-food Systems, to be held on 24-26 February 2026.

The programme will strengthen the capacity of policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners through expert-led sessions, regional case studies, and interactive peer learning, with a focus on climate risk assessment and risk-sensitive planning for agri-food systems.

Key benefits

- * Practical tools for climate risk assessment and planning
- * Knowledge on integrating risk-sensitive approaches into agri-food policies
- * Certificate of attendance from CIRDAP

Free registration (deadline: 20 February 2026)

Click Here: <https://forms.gle/cVTZLB4KNzuq8jYF6>

More details

View the Brochure: <https://cirdap.org/InternationalOnlineTrainingProgramBrochure>

Join us and be part of the regional effort to build sustainable and resilient agri-food systems.



The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and the Korea Legislation Research Institute (KLRI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 22 January 2026, marking an important step toward strengthening cooperation in rural development, governance, and policy innovation across the Asia - Pacific region.

The MoU aims to promote collaborative programmes, knowledge exchange, capacity building, and the use of legislative research, legal information systems, and digital tools to support evidence-based rural development policies and community resilience. Through this partnership, both institutions will work together on joint projects, training initiatives, and technology - supported governance solutions to benefit rural communities in CIRDAP Member Countries.



The MoU was signed on behalf of CIRDAP by Mr. FAM Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, and on behalf of KLRI by Mr. Yeongsoo Han, President. The signing ceremony was honoured by the presence of His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, along with representatives from both organisations.



This collaboration reflects CIRDAP's continued commitment to fostering regional partnerships that contribute to inclusive, sustainable, and integrated rural development.

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!

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



CIRDAP successfully hosted the Knowledge Series 50 Webinar on “Empowering Smallholders: Seed System Innovation for Rural Growth” on 22 January 2026.

The session featured Dr. Swati Nayak, Scientist and South Asia Lead – Seed System and Product Management, Rice Breeding Innovation Department, CGIAR – IRRI (Philippines), as the Distinguished Speaker.



The webinar discussed how innovative seed systems play a critical role in strengthening smallholder farmers, improving productivity,

and supporting inclusive rural growth. Key areas covered included varietal evaluation, quality seed access, capacity development, seed entrepreneurship, policy catalyzation, and the integration of formal and farmer-managed seed systems.

The webinar was attended by His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, along with experts and participants from CIRDAP Member Countries. Participants actively shared their views, making the session highly interactive and informative.



CIRDAP sincerely thanks the speaker and all participants for contributing to this valuable knowledge - sharing platform.



IRD Model: 17 - Samurdhi Program of Sri Lanka Empowering Rural Communities

The Samurdhi Program of Sri Lanka, managed by the Sri Lanka Samurdhi Authority, is a flagship initiative aimed at alleviating poverty and improving the socio-economic conditions of the country's most vulnerable populations. Established in 1995 under the Samurdhi Authority Act No. 17, the program reflects its name, which means prosperity or well-being, by providing financial support, social protection, and community development initiatives to low-income families, particularly in rural and marginalized areas.

The key objectives of the Samurdhi Program include poverty alleviation, economic empowerment, social protection, and facilitation of local development projects. By offering income-generating opportunities, micro-credit, vocational training, and infrastructure development, the program encourages self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods. Social welfare initiatives target the elderly, persons with



disabilities, widows, and other disadvantaged groups, ensuring that the most vulnerable have access to essential services and support.

The Department of Samurdhi Development, established under the Divineguma Act No. 01 of 2013, oversees ten integrated programs implemented across 25 districts. These programs include livelihood development, marketing promotion, social development, community-based organizations, information technology, training and capacity building, media outreach, community-based banking, social welfare, and social security. Collectively, these initiatives aim to empower individuals and families, strengthen communities, and enhance economic and social well-being.

The Samurdhi Program operates through a decentralized structure with district and divisional offices and relies on community participation and Samurdhi officers to implement its programs at the grassroots level.

Recent reforms have focused on improving targeting mechanisms and promoting sustainable livelihoods to reduce dependency on welfare assistance. Despite challenges such as distribution inefficiencies and occasional transparency issues, the Samurdhi Program remains a vital part of Sri Lanka's social safety net, supporting millions of families and contributing to a more equitable and prosperous nation.

Through its holistic approach, the Samurdhi Program continues to transform the lives of rural communities, ensuring that poverty reduction and social empowerment are central to Sri Lanka's development agenda.

Preserving Heritage: Students of the University of Dhaka Explore the Iconic Chameli House



A group of students from the Department of History, University of Dhaka, visited CIRDAP as part of their coursework on Bangladesh: Archaeology, Heritage, and Culture on January 11, 2026. As part of their academic requirements, the students conducted an intensive fieldwork session at the historic Chameli House, an iconic site reflecting Bangladesh's rich architectural and cultural evolution.



During the visit, the students closely examined the building's intricate design and historical layers, gaining hands-on insights that extended well beyond the classroom. They also interviewed long-serving staff members to understand the past and present transformations of Chameli House, enriching their research with lived experiences and institutional memory.

CIRDAP is proud to facilitate such academic engagements that bridge historical knowledge with heritage conservation and research. We warmly welcome initiatives that foster awareness, scholarship, and appreciation of Bangladesh's invaluable cultural heritage.

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 Dr. Venkatamallu Thadaboina, Program Officer (Learning) and CIRDAP Email: po_learning@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;
- 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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