

VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities
Issue 19, March 2026



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 Service Centres-By the Rural, of the Rural, and for the Rural

Villages are gradually turning into old-age homes, increasingly inhabited by the elderly, while able-bodied youth migrate to cities regardless of their education or skill levels. Urban areas continue to attract them with promises of better job opportunities and improved living facilities.

This raises a critical question: how can we bring urban-like facilities into rural areas so that rural youth are retained and sustainably engaged within their own communities?

Urban areas today are saturated with e-commerce services—covering food delivery, groceries, transportation, and household maintenance. Extending these

services to rural regions could be transformative. Establishing rural service centers across clusters of villages can create employment opportunities for local youth, provide essential services to communities, generate markets for rural products, and ensure access to urban goods at affordable prices. Such initiatives would significantly enhance the vibrancy of rural life and help attract, retain, and sustain rural youth.

A practical starting point is the expansion of urban-based e-commerce platforms into rural contexts—concepts such as “Rural Amazon,” “Rural Uber,” or “Rural OYO”—customized to suit the rural ecosystem. Additional services such as rural courier networks, custom hiring centers, agri-processing and packaging units, agricultural input supply systems, and emergency services like ambulances can greatly improve the quality of rural life. These platforms can deliver quality goods and services at affordable prices directly to households, while also enabling the provision of skilled services within rural communities. Leveraging existing, time-tested platforms can help initiate this transformation effectively.

Integrating rural entrepreneurs—such as farmers, shop owners, and service providers—into unified local service platforms can help them scale and innovate. The size and scope of these service networks can be tailored to the size and needs of village clusters. These village clusters can act as hubs for government service delivery through digital platforms and local support, while also enabling more effective implementation of private-sector CSR initiatives.

However operationalizing these ideas faces challenges such as shifting mindsets, building trust in digital transactions, ensuring affordability, improving skills and business discipline, enhancing digital literacy, addressing connectivity issues, and managing resistance from existing service providers. Despite these obstacles, taking the first step is essential.

Importantly, the goal is not to urbanize rural areas, but to make urban-quality services accessible within rural settings. This can be achieved by investing in both people and the planet, promoting green jobs, strengthening markets for rural products, and enabling the retention, retraining, and sustainable engagement of rural youth.

Realizing this vision will require bold initiatives from the private sector, supported by proactive policies and sustained commitment from the government. With thoughtful implementation and local customization, this model has the potential to redefine rural development in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Galepu Mindfulness city project of Bhutan is a dream roadmap for entire Asia and Pacific. Wish the project, a grand success.



With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara
Director General, CIRDAP



In alignment with the 2026 International Day of Forests theme, “Forests and Economies,” the Philippine Forestry Youth Summit (PFYS) 2026 held from 21 to 23 March 2026 at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. This three day interactive event brings together high school, undergraduate, and graduate students from across the Philippines who share a passion for forestry, environment, and sustainable development.

Anchored on the theme “YABONG: Empowering Philippine Forests as Engines of a Green and Inclusive Economy,” the summit aims to strengthen youth understanding of forests as both vital ecosystems and key drivers of resilient and inclusive economies. Recognizing young people as essential stakeholders in the forestry sector, PFYS 2026 provides a platform for participants to engage with forestry professionals, critically examine current challenges, and propose innovative solutions that place forests at the core of sustainable development.



The summit advances several Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting inclusive learning, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by preparing youth for meaningful careers in forestry, SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by highlighting the role of forests in building resilience, SDG 13 (Climate Action) through climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, and SDG 17 (Partnership for Goals) by fostering multi sectoral collaboration.

CIRDAP is proud to support the Plenary Session titled “Forests as Engines of a Green and Inclusive Economy.” Through engaging plenary sessions, workshops, competitions, and institutional tours, the summit equips participants with essential technical knowledge, research skills, and leadership competencies. It serves as a dynamic space for knowledge exchange, innovation, and networking among students, professionals, and forestry related institutions.

Forests are more than serene landscapes. They are lifelines that sustain communities, protect biodiversity, and drive pathways toward a sustainable and inclusive future. As the world navigates urgent environmental challenges and shifts toward greener economies, forests stand at the heart of resilience, development, and shared prosperity.

The future of forests depends on those who choose to protect and value them. CIRDAP is honored to join in empowering the next generation of forest stewards, helping shape a greener and more inclusive future for all.



CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE SERIES-54

Webinar on 'Gross National Happiness and its Operationalization in Bhutan'

Monday, March 16th, 2026
 11:00 AM (Bangladesh time)
 11:00 AM (Bhutan time)
[Click here for zoom link](#)

Esteemed Speaker
H. E. DASHO KARMA HAMU DORJEE
 Ambassador of Bhutan
 Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Dhaka,
 Bangladesh

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

Organized by CIRDAP | Venue: Virtual | Coordinator: Ms. Huralin Jannat
 icd@cirdap.org | Via Zoom Conference | www.cirdap.org | communication_officer@cirdap.org

CIRDAP hosted an enlightening session as part of its Knowledge Series 54, focusing on the visionary concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and its successful operationalization in Bhutan held on March 16th, 2026.



OUTLINE

01. Brief Introduction to Bhutan and GNH
02. GNH Indicators & Survey
03. Practical applications of GNH indicators and Survey findings
04. Gelephu Mindfulness City

The webinar featured Her Excellency DASHO KARMA HAMU DORJEE, Ambassador of Bhutan to Bangladesh, who shared profound insights into how Bhutan prioritizes holistic progress over purely economic metrics.

Key Takeaways from the Webinar:

The discussion centered on the philosophy that sustainable development must balance material growth with spiritual and emotional wellbeing. Here are the core elements discussed:



The Origins of GNH: Coined by His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan in the 1970s, GNH challenges the traditional GDP model by giving equal weight to non economic aspects of life.

The Four Pillars: The framework stands on Good Governance, Sustainable Socio Economic Development, Cultural Preservation, and Environmental Conservation. **A Scientific Approach:** Bhutan uses the Alkire Foster method to track progress through a single number index across 33 indicators.

The Nine Domains of Wellbeing: To ensure a "good life" for its citizens, Bhutan measures psychological wellbeing, health, education, time use, cultural diversity, good governance, community vitality, ecological resilience, and living standards.

The session was chaired by H E Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and active participation from experts across CIRDAP Member Countries. This exchange of knowledge reinforces our commitment to finding innovative, people centered approaches to rural development.

The conference was jointly organized by the Institute of Livelihood Research and Training (ILRT) and the Participatory Rural Development Initiative Society (PRDIS) in association with ICAR -NAARM and other reputed government, corporate and non-government organizations including FAO and CIRDAP on 19-20 February 2026 at Hyderabad, India. The Conference brought together over 300 stakeholders to share experiences, academic insights, and practice-driven solutions on livelihood that also align with the SDGs and the India's Vision of 2047.

Key Recommendations:

Emerging from 10 thematic recommendation clusters:

• **Ecological Foundations:**

Scale regenerative agriculture, climate-smart NRM, agroforestry & circular economy models as core livelihood infrastructure

• **Strengthen Institutions:**

Scale SHGs, FPOs & cooperatives; embed Gender Resource Centers within NRLM; improve governance & professional management

• **Financial Inclusion:** Move from account access to active usage; scale Sakhi community intermediary models; design seasonal & climate-responsive financial products

• **Technology & Innovation:** Leverage AI, fintech & blockchain via assisted digital models; bridge academia-industry-community innovation ecosystems

• **Youth & Enterprise:** Create agri-entrepreneurship pathways (AC&ABC model); restore economic viability & social dignity to the farming profession

• **Evidence & Convergence:** Align NRLM, NABARD, state programmes & CSR through 3Ps framework; institutionalize action research & knowledge platforms



Dr. P Chandra Shekara, DG, CIRDAP delivering key note address



Dignitaries on the dais

The landmark outcome of the conference was the release of the **Hyderabad Livelihood declaration** with a sincere appeal to all GO/ NGOs, national/ international institutions, CSR bodies & community groups to adopt a cluster of villages and pilot the 3Ps recommendations towards transforming Rural Livelihood Landscape in India.

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), in collaboration with the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), successfully organized the International Training Programme on “Geo-Informatics Applications in Rural Development” (30 March to 04 April 2026) at NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

The programme was funded by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. The inaugural session was graced and formally welcomed by HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP.

The programme brought together 17 distinguished participants from CIRDAP Member Countries including Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, along with representatives from NIRDPR and CIRDAP.



The training programme emphasized the application of geo-spatial technologies, including Remote Sensing (RS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Global Positioning System (GPS), in rural development planning and implementation. Participants actively engaged in knowledge-sharing sessions, country presentations, and interactive discussions focusing on integrating geoinformatics into policy frameworks and practical interventions to advance sustainable rural development and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As part of the programme, participants undertook different field visits such as the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the Rural Technology Park (RTP). These visits provided valuable insights into innovative agricultural practices and rural technologies. Group work sessions were conducted following the visits, enabling participants to reflect on their learning and explore practical applications in their respective country contexts.



This initiative underscores CIRDAP’s continued commitment to strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing institutional capacities, and promoting innovative technological approaches for inclusive and sustainable rural transformation across its member countries.



Aruna, a transformative Indonesian e-commerce startup founded in 2016, demonstrates how digital innovation can reshape rural livelihoods and strengthen coastal economies. Aruna connects small scale fishers directly to national and international markets, reducing dependence on middlemen and enabling fairer income distribution within fishing communities.

Operating through a digital platform and a network of local processing units known as miniplants, Aruna integrates technology with grassroots supply chains. Fishers use mobile applications to report catches, receive real time pricing, and coordinate directly with processing centers. This system ensures that pricing is based on catch weight and quality standards, promoting transparency and trust between producers and buyers.

A key feature of Aruna’s model is its emphasis on quality assurance and post harvest handling. The miniplants are equipped with freezing and packaging technologies that preserve freshness and meet export requirements. This enables small scale fishers to access high value domestic and international markets that were previously out of reach. At the same time, improved logistics and streamlined supply chains contribute to lower consumer prices, making seafood more affordable for end users.

The impact of Aruna’s approach is visible in regions such as Konawe and other coastal areas across Indonesia. The model has generated multiple socio economic benefits:

1. Improved livelihoods through fair and standardized pricing, leading to increased fisher income
2. Reduced consumer costs by approximately fifteen percent due to efficient supply chain management
3. Enhanced market access for small scale producers through digital connectivity
4. Strengthened quality control through modern processing, freezing, and packaging systems
5. Promotion of sustainable fishing practices and coastal resource management
6. Increased transparency and traceability in seafood supply chains

Beyond economic gains, Aruna contributes to environmental sustainability by encouraging responsible fishing practices and supporting traceable seafood products. This alignment with sustainability principles ensures long term viability of marine resources while maintaining market competitiveness.

Aruna’s integrated approach illustrates how digital platforms can bridge rural producers with global markets while fostering inclusive growth. By combining technology, infrastructure, and community engagement, the initiative empowers coastal fishers to participate more effectively in the global maritime economy.



In the cool, mist-covered hills of Nuwara Eliya, the day begins early for many women whose lives are rooted in resilience and hard work. From cultivating strawberries and spices to weaving carpets and producing mushrooms, their contributions play a vital role in sustaining Sri Lanka's rural economy. Yet, for years, these women have faced significant challenges—limited access to finance, restricted market opportunities, and persistent gender inequalities—that have constrained their ability to fully realize their potential.



The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) supported the Women Development & Rural

Livelihood Project, titled “Women and Youth Empowerment Programme for Sustainable Inclusive Rural Development in Sri Lanka: A Bottom-Up Approach,” implemented by the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute (HARTI), which set out to create meaningful change—one woman, one enterprise, and one household at a time.



The project aimed to enhance the livelihoods of rural women by supporting income-generating activities tailored to their needs. Through direct engagement and dialogue the project identified the real challenges faced by women and youth, ensuring that solutions were community-driven and inclusive. Each participant received financial assistance



of LKR 35,000, along with training, technical guidance, and support in accessing markets for their products. Progress was carefully monitored, focusing not only on income growth but also on broader improvements in their quality of life.

A total of twenty-two women participated in this initiative. Most had completed secondary education, while some had pursued advanced-level studies, yet struggled to secure stable employment. They were engaged in farming, food processing, handicrafts, and other small-scale enterprises, all while balancing household responsibilities. In Sri Lanka, female unemployment—particularly among young women—remains higher than that of men. This project helped bridge that gap by creating opportunities for economic participation and empowerment.

Before the project, many of these families lived below the poverty line, with some having little to no income. Today, their stories reflect transformation and hope. Every participant reported an increase in earnings, with additional monthly incomes ranging from LKR 2,500 to LKR 30,000. One inspiring example is a woman who began mushroom cultivation from scratch and now earns approximately LKR 10,000 per month.

Beyond income, the impact has been deeply personal and far-reaching. Families now enjoy improved food security and nutrition, and all children are attending school regularly. When women earn, the benefits extend across the entire household—strengthening not just economic stability, but also dignity and confidence. These are not just statistics; they are living stories echoed across villages in Nuwara Eliya.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Limited access to credit and financial services continues to hinder business expansion. External shocks, such as rising costs and natural disasters—including Cyclone Ditwah during the final phase of the project—have also affected progress. Additionally, women face structural barriers such as inadequate storage facilities, low market prices, reliance on intermediaries, and restricted access to land and decision-making power. The burden of unpaid care work further limits their time and opportunities for growth.

The experience from Nuwara Eliya clearly demonstrates that with the right support, training, and investment, women can drive meaningful and lasting change in society. As mothers, wives, and sisters, they play a central role in nurturing families and communities, bringing insight, care, and resilience to every aspect of life. When supported by governments, development partners, and society at large—through financial inclusion, capacity-building, and improved market access—they can unlock pathways to sustainable and inclusive development.

These twenty-two women have shown remarkable strength, resilience, and determination in transforming their lives. With the support of CIRDAP and HARTI, they did not wait for the world to change—they became its quiet transformation, shaping it with every harvest, every grain of spice, and every delicate thread woven into a carpet.

This work is devoted to the twenty-two women of Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka, whose courage and perseverance stand as a powerful testament to the impact of empowerment. On this International Women’s Day, their stories are not only honored—they are proudly celebrated.

- Dr. Usharani Boruah, Librarian & Gender coordinator, CIRDAP

CIRDAP Marks International Women’s Day 2026 with Reflections on Gender Mainstreaming

CIRDAP celebrated International Women’s Day 2026 through an in-house programme on 11 March 2026, bringing together CIRDAP Faculty to reflect on the importance of gender equality in both professional and personal life.



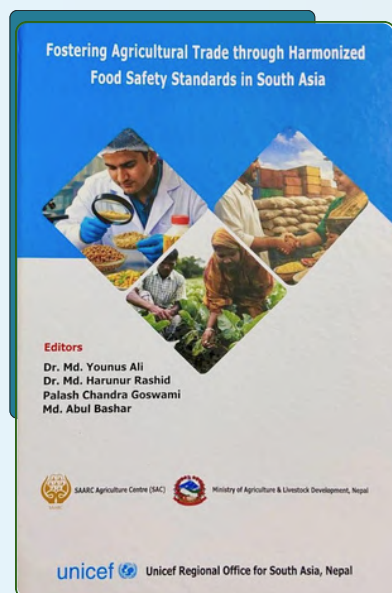
The session began with opening remarks by Dr. Usharani Boruah, Librarian and Gender Coordinator of CIRDAP, who highlighted the significance of International Women’s Day and the need to continue promoting gender-inclusive development.

The Director General of CIRDAP, H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, shared his remarks emphasizing the importance of mainstreaming gender perspectives in institutional work and rural development initiatives.

A special segment “Voices by CIRDAP Staff” allowed staff members to share their thoughts and experiences on “Mainstreaming Gender in Work and Life,” reflecting on how gender equality can be practiced in everyday professional responsibilities as well as in personal life.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Babu Kaji Thapa, Programme Officer Research, appreciating the participation of all staff members and reaffirming CIRDAP’s commitment to gender-responsive development.

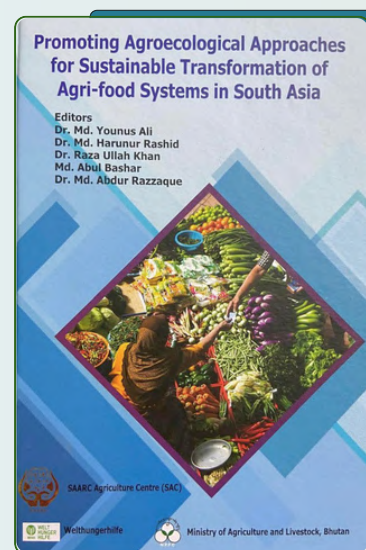
CIRDAP's Honorable Director General, Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, graced the Book Unveiling Ceremony organized by the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Presided over by Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid, Director of the SAARC Agriculture Centre, at the 21st Omor Ekushey Book Fair held at the Bangla Academy premises, Dhaka, on 14 March 2026.



At the event, the Director General joined as the Chief Guest and formally unveiled two important publications of the SAARC Agriculture Centre titled

“Promoting Agroecological Approaches for Sustainable Transformation of Agri-food Systems in South Asia” and “Fostering Agricultural Trade through Harmonized Food Safety Standards in South Asia.”

These publications highlight key regional priorities including sustainable agricultural practices, agroecological transformation, and the importance of harmonized food safety standards to facilitate agricultural trade in South Asia.



They also emphasize strengthening food safety systems, supporting fortified foods, and enhancing regional cooperation to ensure safe, nutritious, and sustainable food systems.

The Director General congratulated the SAARC Agriculture Centre and all contributing experts for their valuable work and reiterated the importance of knowledge sharing, regional collaboration, and public-private partnerships in advancing resilient agri-food systems across South Asia.





The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific and Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth, Ernakulam, Kerala, India, officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding, marking a significant step towards fostering collaboration in the fields of rural development, research, and academic exchange.

The MoU Signing Ceremony was organized by the Centre for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and External Relations in association with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth on 18 March 2026 at University Headquarters.

The agreement was formally exchanged between HE. Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General of the CIRDAP and Prof. Manoj Kumar Arora, Vice Chancellor of Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth.



The ceremony was graced by the presence of Dr P Rajendran, Registrar in charge, and Dr S Glory Swarupa, Dean of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and External Relations.

The programme featured a welcome address by Dr Bindu MP, followed by an introduction to international initiatives by Ms Anupama Jims. Opening remarks were delivered by Dr P Rajendran, while Dr S Glory Swarupa highlighted the future directions and collaborative opportunities under this partnership. HE DG, CIRDAP made a brief presentation on CIRDAP activities and partnership potential. The session concluded with remarks from Professor Manoj Kumar Arora.



This Memorandum of Understanding reflects a shared commitment to advancing knowledge, strengthening institutional cooperation, and promoting sustainable rural development across the region.

CIRDAP- REEDS International Rural Development Innovation Challenge 2026 was also launched during the programme by releasing the poster.

CIRDAP successfully organized a webinar on Green Building Infrastructure in Rural Development, on Thursday, 5 March 2026, as part of the CIRDAP Knowledge Series 2026.

The webinar was jointly organized by CIRDAP, Non Aligned Movement Centre for South South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC) and Universitas Gadjah Mada Indonesia.

The session featured two distinguished speakers from Universitas Gadjah Mada Indonesia. Dr. Rachmawan Budiarto, Manager of the Centre for Development of Smart and Green Building, and Dr. Sentagi Sesotya Utami, Director of the Centre for Development of Smart and Green Building, shared valuable insights on the role of green infrastructure in advancing sustainable rural development.

The speakers highlighted key principles of green building, including energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, environmentally responsible construction practices, and sustainable infrastructure planning for rural communities. The discussion also emphasized how green infrastructure can help address environmental risks associated with rural development, such as land degradation, deforestation, water pollution, and climate vulnerability.



Asia-Pacific Innovators — Take Your Rural Innovation to the Global Stage!

- Are you transforming rural lives?
- Are you empowering communities, fighting poverty, tackling climate change, or improving access to essential services?
- Has your innovation have the potential to uplift a village, empower a community, or spark transformative change in rural lives?

Your innovation deserves recognition beyond borders.

International Rural Development Innovation Challenge 2026

Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in collaboration with Rural Economic and Educational Development Society (REEDS), presenting this prestigious platform celebrates groundbreaking rural solutions from across the Asia-Pacific region.

If you are a changemaker — community leader, NGO, startup, researcher, or passionate individual — this is your moment.

What We're Looking For

Innovations that address critical rural challenges such as: Poverty & livelihood development, Inequality & social inclusion, Climate resilience & sustainability, Access to education, health, and essential services, Community-led transformation.

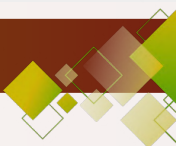
Awards & Global Recognition

Top 5 Innovations: Cash Prize + Certificate

Next 10 Impactful Ideas : Certificate of Appreciation

Featured in a Book + Invitation to an International Conference

Your work could inspire policies, partnerships, and replication across nations.



How to Apply

Submit a proposal (maximum 5 pages) in any language

Include high-resolution photos

Provide evidence of impact or potential impact

Add a short video byte (optional but encouraged)

Download the brochure:

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

Share your innovation Email: communication_officer@cirdap.org

Submission Deadline: **May 31, 2026**

Let's celebrate rural wisdom.

One Innovation. Endless Change. Countless Smiles.

DG CIRDAP Visits Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Cochin, India

HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific, visited ICAR - Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute in India, accompanied by Dr. S. Glory Swarupa, Dean - Innovation, Entrepreneurship, International Relations, Chinmaya Viswa Vidyapeeta, Cochin, India



During the visit, productive discussions were held with Dr. Grinson George, Director of CMFRI, focusing on strengthening collaboration in the areas of sustainable livelihoods, fisheries research, and rural development.

The interaction marks an important step toward enhancing knowledge exchange and fostering joint initiatives between the institutions, contributing to the advancement of the blue economy and sustainable development goals.



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





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.





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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**Chameli House
The Headquarter of CIRDAP**



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