

VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities
Issue 20, April 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

**Four weeks, Four Themes, Four Messages to Rural Development in Asia and Pacific**

Dear Partners

April was the most vibrant month for CIRDAP with four International Programs on four important themes in Rural Development which were attended by 17 countries. Major participation came from CIRDAP member countries.

Thanks to FAO and Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Indian Government supported three international programmes on themes namely Geo Informatics in Rural Development, Community Led Rural Development and Climate Change in the context of Rural Development. In spite of war impacting international travel, ten CIRDAP member countries took part in these training programmes

organized at National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad, India. Whereas FAO funded programme on Global Guidelines for National Aquaculture Investment Plan organized at Jakarta, Indonesia attracted the participation of 17 countries from Asia, Africa and America.

Geo Informatics Technology has the modern Technological solutions to grass root level problems related to soil, water, Pest and Diseases, crop Forecasting, Planning, Geo Spatial planning of Agriculture markets. Direct Benefit Transfers, Forest coverage, Disaster Management, which decides the fate of villagers. Research gaps are not visible much however; adoption gaps are prominently observed. Hence, the role of Rural Development machinery is to take the technology to the doorstep of villagers through sensitization and integration into the job chart of Rural Development extension workers.

Inspiring community led Rural Development initiatives were discussed where not only government played important role but also NGOs, Cooperatives, FPOs, SHGs, Rural entrepreneurs brought innovations and sustainable solutions. However, these success stories need upscaling. Massive sensitization on climate change impacts was felt necessary, not only to Rural communities but also to all stakeholders including scientists and institutions which are supposed to work on solutions. All the country representatives were encouraged to work out BACK AT WORK PLANS to take the learnings forward in their respective countries.

Fisheries continue to play important role in south Asia and Pacific, ensuring the livelihood to large population, providing nutrition security to society and income security to rural communities. Hence, naturally attracts investment from public and private sectors. The Investment plan which is being worked out decides the direction and magnitude of investment to various sectors in Fisheries which is customized to country specific situation. Again, acceptance and adoption by member countries is critical point in success of this mission.

Hope the seeds of change sown in the programmes would definitely yield results over a period benefitting rural communities

With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara
Director General, CIRDAP



The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Government of Indonesia successfully organized the FAO-CIRDAP Workshop on Sustainable Aquaculture Investment in Jakarta from 13th to 16th April 2026. The workshop was convened under the theme “Toward a Global Framework for National Aquaculture Investment Plans Lessons and Insights from Asia” and brought together 36 experts and policymakers from 17 countries along with representatives from leading international organizations.



The inaugural session featured opening remarks from HE. Dr.P Chandra Shekara Director General of CIRDAP, Rajendra Aryal, FAO Representative in Indonesia, and HE. TB Haeru Rahayu, Director General of Aquaculture at the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia. In his address, Dr Shekara emphasized the transformative potential of aquaculture in strengthening food security, enhancing rural livelihoods, and promoting inclusive economic growth across the Asia Pacific region. He highlighted the importance of National Aquaculture Investment Plans as strategic instruments to translate policy priorities into bankable and sustainable investments that benefit rural communities, women, and youth.



The FAO Representative underscored the growing demand among countries for structured investment frameworks and reaffirmed FAO’s commitment to supporting member states through global guidelines and its Blue Transformation Roadmap. Dr TB Haeru Rahayu stressed the importance of inclusive aquaculture development, noting that small scale producers must have equitable access to finance, resources, and markets.

Over four days, the workshop facilitated rich discussions on global and regional aquaculture investment trends, challenges, and opportunities. Country presentations from across Asia including Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam provided valuable insights into national priorities, institutional frameworks, and investment gaps.

A major achievement of the workshop was the review and validation of three key documents: the Regional Synthesis Report, the NAIP Model Framework, and the Conceptual Framework for Pilot Implementation. These outputs will serve as practical tools for countries to design, implement, and scale sustainable aquaculture investment strategies. The validation process ensured strong regional ownership, while expert panel discussions explored innovative financing mechanisms and public private partnerships to transform strategies into viable investment projects.

The workshop concluded with a forward looking roadmap emphasizing the promotion of structured, inclusive, and financially viable National Aquaculture Investment Plans. Participating countries expressed commitment to pilot the framework, strengthen regional collaboration, and align aquaculture investments with global development priorities.

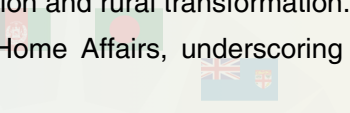
This workshop marks a significant step toward building a coherent global framework for aquaculture investment. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusive planning, it reinforces the role of aquaculture in contributing to food security, resilient livelihoods, and sustainable development across the region and beyond.



HE Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, met with Dr. Drs. La Ode Ahmad P. Bolombo, AP, M.SI, Director General of Village Administration at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Republic of Indonesia.



As a valued member of the CIRDAP Technical Committee, Indonesia continues to be a vital partner in our mission. The discussions focused on enhancing technical cooperation and sharing innovative strategies for village administration and rural transformation. The meeting was well attended by key officials from both CIRDAP and the Ministry of Home Affairs, underscoring a mutual commitment to sustainable development and regional prosperity.



Successful Conclusion of CIRDAP -NIRDPR International Training Programme on Geo Informatics Applications in Rural Development, NIRDPR, Hyderabad, India

CIRDAP, in collaboration with NIRDPR, successfully concluded the International Training Programme on Geo Informatics Applications in Rural Development held from 30 March to 04 April 2026 at National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in Hyderabad.

The final day of the programme featured an important session on Bhuvan, the geo portal of Indian Space Research Organisation, focusing on its use and applications in rural development and decentralized governance, with valuable lessons for Asia Pacific countries.



Delegates also shared their key learnings and back at work plans, reflecting on how they will apply the knowledge gained in their respective countries and organizations. The programme was attended by 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

HE. Dr P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, met with Shri Rohit Kansal, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, in Delhi on 24 April 2026.

During the meeting, the Director General briefed on the ongoing activities and initiatives of CIRDAP. The Secretary appreciated the efforts and assured full cooperation and continued support from India in advancing shared goals of rural development across the region.



The discussion also focused on the Action Plan for 2026 to 2027 and preparations for the observance of World Rural Development Day 2026, following the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly declaring 6 July as World Rural Development Day.

Lal Chandama, Joint Secretary, International Cooperation, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, was also present during the meeting.

NIRDPR, India, Opens Doors: Fully Sponsored Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management for International Candidates, 2026–27

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is pleased to announce a fully sponsored academic opportunity extended by the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, India, for the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM), Batch 24, for the academic year 2026–27.

This one-year residential diploma programme is specifically designed for in-service professionals working in agriculture, rural development, and allied sectors across CIRDAP Member Countries. The programme is jointly conducted by CIRDAP and NIRDPR, and is fully funded by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, covering all expenses, including air travel reimbursement as per Government of India norms.

The curriculum combines classroom instruction and interactive learning with both short and long fieldwork visits, culminating in a Rural Organisational Internship to provide participants with a comprehensive, hands-on understanding of rural development management. Candidates must hold a graduate degree in any discipline and possess relevant work experience in the rural sector.

Nominations are to be submitted through the designated CIRDAP Technical Committee Members of respective countries, with a maximum of three nominations permitted per country. Shortlisted candidates will undergo selection interviews conducted jointly by CIRDAP and NIRDPR via video conferencing.

The deadline for applications is 31 May 2026.

For further information and to submit nominations, please visit www.cirdap.org or contact Mr. F.A.M. Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP, at acirdap@cirdap.org or via WhatsApp at +8801912432366.

CIRDAP encourages all eligible member organisations and networks to seize this valuable capacity-building opportunity and submit their nominations at the earliest.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ
RAJENDRANAGAR, HYDERABAD - 500 030, INDIA
Centre for PG Studies and Distance Education

Join the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management for International In-Service Students (PGDRDM)

Programme Overview:

- Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM).
- Sponsored by CIRDAP for international in-service candidates One-year
- residential program with a focus on rural development.

Admission Guidelines:

- Open to candidates working in Agricultural, Rural Development, and allied sectors
- Must have work experience in the rural sector.
- **Application deadline: 31st May, 2026**

Programme Components:

1. Classroom teaching and interactive learning.
2. Fieldwork (short and long visits).
3. Field Attachment (Rural Organisational Internship).

Selection Process:

- Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed via teleconferencing/videoconferencing.
- Jointly conducted by CIRDAP and NIRDPR


Essential Qualifications:

- Graduate in any Discipline

Financial Support:

- Provided by the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt of India.

Contact Information:
CIRDAP : administration@cirdap.org



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) and with support from the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, successfully conducted a six-day Collaborative International Training Programme in Hyderabad from 13 to 18 April 2026. The programme brought together 20 participants from Bangladesh, India, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, offering a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, regional cooperation, and capacity building in sustainable rural development.



The programme aimed to share best practices in community driven development, strengthen capacities in rural governance, climate resilience, entrepreneurship, and social empowerment, and advance South-South cooperation. Participants also gained exposure to India's rural institutions, livelihood programmes, and cultural heritage.

"Country presentations highlighted diverse experiences including rural tourism in Malaysia, community radio in Bangladesh, revolving fund projects in Myanmar, community forestry in Nepal, and national development programmes in Vietnam and Thailand."

Technical sessions explored the core principles of community driven development, including participation, transparency, inclusivity, and sustainability. Discussions on local governance underscored the role of decentralised institutions such as Panchayati Raj in strengthening rural livelihoods. Sessions on climate change highlighted the urgency of climate-resilient agriculture and disaster preparedness. Thematic discussions on women and youth empowerment drew on experiences from the National Rural Livelihoods Mission, illustrating how self-help groups drive financial inclusion and social transformation, while dedicated sessions on rural youth employment focused on skill development under government schemes. Sustainable agriculture practices, including organic and integrated farming systems, were also addressed.

Field exposure visits formed an integral component of the programme. Participants visited a Gram Panchayat to observe grassroots governance and participatory planning in practice, explored self-help group enterprises at Indira Mahila Shakti Bazaar, and toured the Rural Technology Park to discover innovations supporting rural livelihoods and sustainable development.



The valedictory session concluded the programme on an encouraging note, with participants sharing reflections, feedback, and their Back at Work Plans, outlining how they intend to apply the knowledge gained in their home countries. This collaborative initiative reaffirmed CIRDAP's commitment to strengthening community-led development, enhancing regional cooperation, and promoting sustainable rural livelihoods through knowledge exchange and capacity building.



HE. Dr P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, met with HE. Mr M Chandra Widya Yudha, Director of the Non Aligned Movement Centre for South South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC), on 15 April 2026 in Jakarta Indonesia. The meeting was attended by officials from both the sides.

As a valued MoU partner of CIRDAP, the meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment to advancing South South cooperation, strengthening institutional collaboration, and promoting sustainable rural development across member countries.

Both leaders discussed avenues for enhanced partnership, knowledge exchange, and joint initiatives to address emerging development challenges and support inclusive growth in the region.



United for Climate Resilience: CIRDAP and NIRDPR Launch International Training Programme on Building Resilient Rural Communities in a Changing Climate at NIRDPR, Hyderabad, India

CIRDAP is delighted to announce the inauguration of the CIRDAP NIRDPR Collaborative International Training Programme on "Building Resilient Rural Communities in a Changing Climate", held on 27 April 2026 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad, India.

The programme was formally inaugurated by HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General, CIRDAP, and Shri V. Bhagaiah, Eklavya Grameen Vikas Foundation, Telangana. Organized jointly by CIRDAP and NIRDPR, the programme brought together 27 participants from 10 Member Countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Philippines, and India, along with representatives from both organizations.



Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General CIRDAP, in his keynote address, emphasized that climate change is a shared responsibility and highlighted the importance of sustainable practices, natural farming, community mobilization, and disaster preparedness. He also shared inspiring examples such as Mission Kakatiya and Haritha Haram which demonstrate effective climate resilience initiatives.

Shri V Bhagaiah shared valuable insights on the need to shift our mindset from protecting the environment to protecting ourselves. He stressed the importance of nurturing nature, improving soil health, and promoting agri based enterprises aligned with ecological sustainability.

The programme commenced with a strong message of collective action, innovation, and respect for nature as key drivers for building resilient rural communities in a changing climate. The inauguration set a strong tone for the training programme, combining practical strategies with ethical reflections.





CIRDAP extends its warmest congratulations to Ms. Taylor Schomaker, Owner of Schomaker Farms, Michigan, USA, on being honoured with the Michigan Farm Bureau's 2026 Young Farmer Agriculture Leader Award.



CIRDAP was especially proud to recognise Ms. Schomaker, who has also shared her valuable knowledge and experience as a presenter at the CIRDAP Knowledge Series Webinar, enriching our network with practical insights in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

This prestigious recognition honours outstanding young agriculturalists who demonstrate exemplary leadership in Farm Bureau, farming, and the broader agricultural community.

Beyond her farm operations, Ms. Schomaker has demonstrated remarkable community commitment by establishing the Thomas Township Farmers Market, a weekly gathering that bridges local farms and businesses while making locally grown food more accessible to her community.

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

CIRDAP - REEDS International Rural Development Innovation Challenge 2026

ONE INNOVATION. ENDLESS CHANGE. COUNTLESS SMILES

Tell us about a Rural Innovation that has empowered and inspired a village or community and brought a transformative change to rural lives.

- Top 5 Innovations - Win USD 500 & Certificate Each!
- Features in a BOOK & Attend to International Conference
- Next 10 Bright Ideas - Certificate of Appreciation

Contact: Ms. Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer, CIRDAP
 Email: communication_officer@cirdap.org or WhatsApp here: +880 - 1741589228
 Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)

- 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.**



CIRDAP successfully organized an insightful webinar titled Agri Extension Impactful Innovations in South Asia and Cross Learning Possibilities on Thursday, 9 April 2026. The webinar featured an enriching presentation by Dr Radhey Krishna Tripathi, Coordinator Programs and Partnerships at AEPSA, who shared valuable perspectives on emerging extension models, cross learning opportunities, and the importance of knowledge driven services to enhance the sustainability of the farm sector.

Key discussions emphasized the need for demand-driven and gender-responsive extension services, stronger research–extension linkages, and increased use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). And highlighted the importance of capacity building for extension professionals and farmers, greater stakeholder convergence and partnerships, and the promotion of innovative and pluralistic extension models.

The session was chaired by HE. Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP. The session brought together distinguished experts and stakeholders from across CIRDAP Member Countries to discuss innovative and people centered approaches to strengthening agricultural extension systems in the region. The webinar can be accessed in CIRDAP YouTube Channel.

CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE SERIES 55

Webinar on 'Agri Extension: Impactful Innovations in South Asia & Cross Learning Possibilities'

Thursday, April 9, 2026
11:00 AM (Bangladesh time)
Click here for zoom link

Dr. Radhey Krishna Tripathi
Esteemed Speaker
Coordinator (Programs & Partnerships), AEPSA
Director (Technical), National Seed Association of India
Former Director (Technical) Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA), and Director (Extension/IT), DAC, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India

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

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

Transforming Governance: Institutionalizing Gender Responsive Budgeting in Nepal



The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) has released a pivotal policy brief documenting the success of its 2025 pilot initiative in Nepal. In partnership with the Local Development Training Academy (LDTA), Nepal, this program empowered 117 elected representatives and officials, including Mayors and Chief Administrative Officers, to bridge the gap between gender equality commitments and actual public financial management.

The results were remarkable, with participant knowledge scores doubling from an initial 4.09 to a post-test average of 8.29. By providing practical tools and simplified guidelines, the initiative demonstrated that local governments can effectively dismantle structural inequalities when supported by systemic reforms. Moving forward, the brief calls for integrating GRB into mandatory budget procedures and fostering multi-stakeholder coordination with NGOs and the private sector.

This successful Nepal model now serves as a scalable roadmap for all CIRDAP member countries to ensure that regional development is truly inclusive and gender-accountable.

Read the full brief here: <https://cirdap.org/Policy%20Brief>

In the island nation of Fiji, where geography often challenges health service delivery, access to life saving oxygen has long been a critical issue. For nurses like Udila Tawake, caring for patients with respiratory conditions meant confronting a daily reality of uncertainty due to unreliable oxygen supply. Cases of Hypoxemia were common, yet the tools to manage them were not always available, particularly in remote and hard to reach communities.

The situation became even more urgent during the global crisis of COVID-19, when oxygen demand surged worldwide. However, as Ms Tawake observed, these challenges were not new. They were deeply rooted in systemic issues such as logistical barriers, fragile infrastructure, and frequent power outages that rendered conventional oxygen systems ineffective.



Recognizing the urgency, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services Fiji, in partnership with Cure Kids, launched a transformative initiative known as the Oxygen Project. This innovative intervention aimed to decentralize and modernize oxygen delivery across the country's health facilities.

At the heart of this initiative is the deployment of oxygen concentrators. These compact and portable devices extract oxygen from ambient air and deliver it in a purified form suitable for medical use. By eliminating the dependence on bulky oxygen cylinders, the project significantly reduces the logistical burden of transporting oxygen to remote islands and rural health centres.

Sustainability lies at the core of this innovation. To ensure uninterrupted oxygen supply, especially in areas prone to electricity disruptions, the project integrates solar power systems into health facilities. This approach guarantees that oxygen concentrators remain functional even in off grid settings, thereby enhancing the resilience of the health system.



Equally important is the project's investment in human capacity. Local biomedical engineers, solar technicians, and nurses are trained to operate, maintain, and repair both the concentrators and solar systems. For Ms Tawake, who also serves as the National Coordinator of the initiative, this component is vital. It addresses a common shortcoming of past interventions where equipment was installed but eventually abandoned due to lack of technical expertise. By empowering local professionals, the project ensures long term functionality and ownership.

The Oxygen Project stands as a compelling example of how innovation, when combined with collaboration and sustainability, can transform health outcomes. Supported by the World Health Organization under its regional push for health innovation, this initiative aligns with broader efforts to strengthen health systems across the Western Pacific.

Fiji's experience offers valuable lessons for other countries facing similar challenges. It demonstrates that context appropriate technology, renewable energy integration, and local capacity building can together create resilient and inclusive health solutions.

As Ms Tawake envisions, the true success of such initiatives lies in collective commitment. When governments, partners, and communities work together, innovation becomes more than a concept. It becomes a lifeline, ensuring that even the most remote populations can breathe easier and live healthier lives.

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) convened its Research Project Inception Meeting on 6 April 2026, marking the formal launch of two collaborative research initiatives under the CIRDAP Research Programme 2026. The session brought together researchers from Lao PDR and Bangladesh to present their respective project inception reports, receiving substantive comments and guidance from CIRDAP leadership.

The Director General of CIRDAP addressed the assembly, acknowledged the presentations, and directed the research teams to incorporate the feedback and suggestions shared during the session into revised proposals.

Research Projects Presented

Research Project | Lao PDR

Project Title

"Local Governance Transformation under Ta Saeng Reorganization: Institutional Strengthening, Community Participation, and Sustainable Livelihood Outcomes in Houaphan Province, Lao PDR"

Principal Researcher

Ouanh Phomvisith (Ph.D)

Head, Rural Development and Poverty Reduction Section, Department of Agriculture and Environment, Houaphan Province, Lao PDR

Research Project | Bangladesh

Project Title

"Best Practices in Rural Development: Experiences from Bangladesh and Nepal"

Principal Researcher

Dr. Mizanur Rahman

Director Research, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD)

The Director General of CIRDAP actively engaged with both presentations, offering substantive comments and recommendations to strengthen the research design and methodology. Researchers were requested to revise their proposals in response to the feedback received before resubmission to CIRDAP.

CIRDAP Knowledge Series 55:

Webinar on Empowering Women and Youth for Inclusive Rural Development in Sri Lanka

CIRDAP successfully organized an insightful webinar on Women and Youth Empowerment Programme for Sustainable Inclusive Rural Development in Sri Lanka A Bottom Up Approach on Thursday, April 23, 2026.

The session featured an enriching presentation by Sagarika Hitihamu, Research Fellow and Head of the Rural Development Division at Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute Sri Lanka. She shared valuable insights on grassroots driven strategies that empower women and youth and demonstrated how community led initiatives can drive inclusive and sustainable rural development.

Key Highlights from the Presentation

- * Global context and emerging challenges
- * Project methodology and implementation approach
- * Beneficiary experiences and case insights
- * Sector wise challenges and enterprise development
- * Financial upgrading strategies
- * Stakeholder engagement and collaboration



The webinar emphasized the importance of bottom up approaches in strengthening rural livelihoods, fostering entrepreneurship, and ensuring that women and youth play a central role in development processes.

The session was chaired by HE Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and brought together distinguished experts and stakeholders from across CIRDAP Member Countries.

CIRDAP extends sincere appreciation to the speaker and all participants for contributing to a meaningful and engaging knowledge sharing session. The webinar can be accessed in CIRDAP YouTube Channel.

CIRDAP Congratulates Dr. Devendra Gauchan's New Role in Nepal's National Planning Commission

CIRDAP extends its warmest congratulations to Dr. Devendra Gauchan on his prestigious appointment as a Member of the National Planning Commission by the Government of Nepal.

As an esteemed Agroecology Specialist at International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development and a valued expert of CIRDAP, this recognition reflects his outstanding contributions, dedication, and leadership in advancing sustainable development and rural transformation.

CIRDAP conveys its heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Devendra Gauchan. We look forward to continued engagement and cooperation in the years ahead.



Strengthening Expertise through International Training: CIRDAP Staff Participate in NIRDPR Programmes

In a significant step towards enhancing institutional knowledge and professional excellence, CIRDAP Headquarters deputed nine of its officials to three international training programmes conducted by the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, India, between March and May 2026.

These programmes, organised under the CIRDAP and NIRDPR collaborative framework, were designed to equip development professionals with contemporary skills and knowledge relevant to rural development challenges across Asia and the Pacific.

The first programme on Geo-Informatics Applications in Rural Development was held from 30 March to 04 April 2026. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General; Ms. Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer; and Ms. Najma Yeasmin, Assistant Administrative Officer, attended this training.

The second programme, focused on Community-Driven Approaches to Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, was conducted from 13 to 18 April 2026. Dr. Usharani Boruah, Librarian; Ms. Tahsina Tabassum Sajuti, Executive Assistant Research; and Mr. Shahariar Haque, Executive Officer (CICC), participated in this programme.

The third programme addressed the theme of Building Resilient Rural Communities in a Changing Climate, held from 27 April to 02 May 2026. Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya, Director Research; Mr. F.A.M. Zakirul Huq, Administrative Officer; and Mr. Shishir G. Saha, Finance Officer, attended the training.

Through this series of collaborative training initiatives, CIRDAP continues to demonstrate its commitment to building a knowledgeable, skilled, and forward-looking workforce capable of addressing the evolving development needs of the region. The participation of officials from varied functional departments reflects the organisation's holistic approach to institutional capacity building.

CIRDAP is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Sadique Uddin Molla as Consultant under the Michigan State University–CIRDAP partnership initiative. He brings over 15 years of progressive experience in agricultural development, climate resilience, food systems transformation, and policy engagement across both national and multi-country programmes.

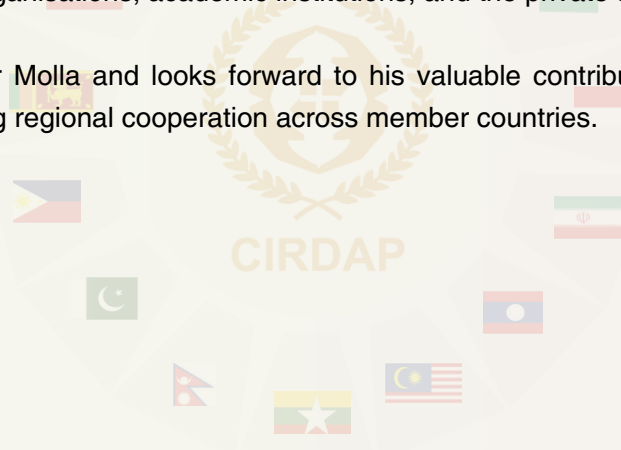
Mr Molla has built a strong professional profile in project and programme management, with extensive expertise in project cycle management, results based management, budgeting, donor compliance, and performance reporting. His experience reflects a deep understanding of managing complex development initiatives while ensuring efficiency, accountability, and impact.



He also possesses a solid background in strategic communications and advocacy. His work has included stakeholder engagement, facilitation of policy dialogue and public forums, media relations, marketing communications, and digital media management. These skills have enabled him to effectively bridge communication between diverse actors and promote inclusive development agendas.

Throughout his career, Mr Molla has successfully managed donor funded portfolios exceeding 6 million US dollars, supported by leading development partners such as the Gates Foundation, USDA, and USAID. He has demonstrated a strong capacity to lead and coordinate multi stakeholder partnerships involving governments, United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organisations, academic institutions, and the private sector.

CIRDAP warmly welcomes Mr Molla and looks forward to his valuable contributions in advancing integrated rural development and strengthening regional cooperation across member countries.





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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