

Taking agritech innovation to smallholder farmers across Asia and the Pacific

A proposed pathway for collaboration under the ILF–CIRDAP Memorandum of Understanding | Colombo conference note

The opportunity

Across CIRDAP member countries, smallholder farmers face related challenges in farm productivity, climate resilience, access to services, post-harvest handling and market participation. Promising innovations will have the greatest value when they are adapted to local needs, delivered through trusted institutions and tested against outcomes that matter to farmers. The collaboration between CIRDAP and Indigram Labs Foundation (ILF) offers a route to connect relevant solutions with the institutions and communities able to put them to use.

Complementary strengths

CIRDAP is an intergovernmental platform for integrated rural development, knowledge exchange and regional cooperation across 15 Asia-Pacific member countries. ILF is a New Delhi-based technology business incubator established with support from India's Department of Science and Technology; it supports enterprises in farm production, digital agriculture, post-harvest systems, food technology and climate-smart solutions through incubation, mentoring, funding support and market linkages.

A practical route from showcase to adoption

1. **Identify country priorities.** CIRDAP and interested member-country institutions identify a defined farmer or rural-enterprise need, the intended users and the potential local delivery partner.
2. **Match and present solutions.** ILF curates relevant, deployment-ready startups and provides concise evidence on product readiness, affordability, local adaptation and expected benefits. Joint thematic showcases or digital presentations allow country stakeholders to assess fit.
3. **Co-design pilots.** Where there is interest, the startup and local partner agree on the setting, farmer engagement, training, commercial model, safeguards and measurable indicators before deployment. Possible themes include water-efficient farming, farm mechanisation, advisory services, post-harvest loss reduction, value addition and clean energy.
4. **Learn and expand.** Partners review farmer uptake and outcomes, document what worked, and consider wider procurement, distribution, investment or adaptation in other member countries where evidence supports it.

Proposed next step

We invite CIRDAP and interested member-country representatives at Colombo to nominate priority challenges and focal institutions for an initial thematic ILF–CIRDAP startup showcase. The two organisations can then agree a shortlist of solutions and develop a focused pilot concept with willing country partners. Any funded activity, delivery obligations or commercial arrangement would be documented separately, as envisaged in the MoU.

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