

Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP): Promoting Integrated Rural Development for the Rural Prosperity.



H.E. DR. P CHANDRA SHEKARA
Director General, CIRDAP

As a pioneer Intergovernmental, Autonomous and Regional organization, Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) established on July 6 back in 46 years ago with a vision 'to be a Centre of Excellence and multi-level platform for cooperation in knowledge transfer and capacity building for developing countries in integrated rural affairs for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific Region'. 15 Asia and Pacific countries namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam are members of CIRDAP.



On July 6, 1979, the Asia-Pacific countries along with other countries came in hands together to create an organization which would promote Integrated Rural Development (IRD) in the Asia-Pacific region through regional cooperation amongst Member States, Link Institutes and Development Partners. This organization established through an international agreement

lodged with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

Since its inception, CIRDAP seeks to improve the quality of life of the far-reaching marginalized rural people, the ultimate beneficiaries of CIRDAP are farmers and rural communities. Headquartered at Chameli House, Bangladesh, the organization fosters knowledge exchange, policy support, and capacity building to empower rural communities and drive sustainable development across Asia-Pacific.

In recognition of the contribution of CIRDAP for strengthening Rural Development in the Asia and Pacific region, the United Nations General Assembly has officially recognized 6th July as World Rural Development Day, coinciding with CIRDAP's foundation day. The recognition has been made the organization not only proud but also focusing to fulfil the responsibilities in Rural Development in Sustainable Development Goals – that 'leave no one behind'



Genesis

The idea of an organization's which will deal with the rural poverty and development challenges came into mind during early 1970's within the discussions of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. A proposal amongst the government was crafted and consulted for a Centre on Integrated Rural Development (IRD) in Bangkok, Thailand, in March 1976. The Director General (DG) of FAO called a Conference of Plenipotentiaries to adopt the agreement to establish of the Centre. On July 29, 1978, this conference was held in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia and after two days on August 1, 1978 the agreement was adopted and signed. At the conference, it was decided Bangladesh will be the host country of the Centre.

CIRDAP started its journey initially with the six countries under the auspicious leadership of its founder leadership Azizul Haq in an office at the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Cumilla, Bangladesh. During the tenure of Mr. Azizul Haq, the member countries grew into 11 states. Currently, CIRDAP has 15 member countries. In 1985, CIRDAP relocated its office to the

historic building called 'Chameli House' in Dhaka. The building was handed over to the Centre by Bangladesh government. Over the years, CIRDAP had received continued support from key international development partners notably the Government of Japan and FAO.

Since its inception, CIRDAP has conducted a wide range of activities including training programmes – Thousands of Rural Development professionals from member countries have been trained in areas such as project management, gender mainstreaming, microfinance, sustainable agriculture, ICT etc.; Action Research – supported pilot projects across its member countries to test and document effective models of community driven development; and Knowledge Sharing & Management – through its publication, journals and digital platforms.

Significant Milestones

In its long successful journey, CIRDAP has achieved several significant milestones.

- The first Asia-pacific Ministerial Meeting on Rural Development held in Dhaka in April 8 & 9, 1987. This ministerial meeting gained a wide popularity amongst the development partners and stakeholder as the Ministers and Secretaries of the Rural Development and Agriculture Ministries attended the meeting. In this meeting, the 'Dhaka Declaration on Rural Development' was adopted.
- In 2008, the Ministerial meeting held in New Delhi, India adopted the Delhi Declaration to further enhance its role in promoting Sustainable rural livelihood, empowering women and leveraging ICT through providing a platform for exchange of ideas, sharing best practices and experiences.
- The second Asia-pacific Ministerial Meeting on Rural Development held in Dhaka in 2010 and the meeting provided CIRDAP a new direction and mandate.
- Former President of India Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam visited CIRDAP on its 33rd foundation day celebration on July 4-5, 2012. While in Dhaka, Dr. Kalam, delivered the lecture on 'Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas' (PURA). He also had a special interactive session with a group of children from Bangladesh and other CIRDAP Member States.
- In 2013, CIRDAP International Conference Centre (CICC) was established which has been turned into a modern hub for international and regional conference, dialogue and capacity building.

How does CIRDAP work?

- CIRDAP provides technical and policy support to ministries and institutions involved in Integrated Rural Development (IRD) by enabling and helping national decision-makers, development practitioners, and planners to exchange ideas and experiences on IRD and to identify areas in which collaborative efforts can be promoted for the mutual benefit of member states.
- CIRDAP works to identify opportunities for collaborative efforts among member states to enhance integrated rural development and address common challenges, particularly in poverty alleviation.

Mission of CIRDAP

To provide technical support and promote innovative best practices on sustainable IRD amongst member countries in Asia-Pacific in order to improve the lives of the rural people.

- To Utilize state-of-the-art ICT
- Provide flagship trainings and capacity development
- Enhance analytical capability in formulating policies & determining appropriate measures (impacts of globalization, trade liberalization, climate change and disaster risks, engagement of communities)
- Foster cooperation on development through collaborative research projects
- Disseminate knowledge gained and transfer of innovative technologies

CIRDAP's Core Activities:

1. Research: Conducting studies and research on rural development issues to inform policy and program design.
2. Pilot Projects: Implementing and evaluating pilot projects that demonstrate innovative rural development solutions.
3. Training and Education: Providing capacity-building opportunities through training programs and educational initiatives to strengthen skills in rural development.
4. Exposure Visits: Organizing visits to successful rural development programs to allow decision-makers and practitioners to learn from each other's experiences.
5. Consultative Conferences/Policy Dialogues: Hosting conferences and dialogues to foster discussions among stakeholders, share best practices, and identify common strategies.
6. Dissemination of Information: Sharing knowledge, research, and best practices across member states to support informed decision-making.

Organizational Structure

The Centre is administered by the Secretariat based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. CIRDAP has three governing bodies, namely Governing Council (GC), the Executive Committee (EC) and the Technical Committee (TC). The Governing Council (GC) is the highest policy and decision-making body of CIRDAP represented by the Ministers of the designated Contact Ministries of all member countries. It sets the overall policy and programme direction for the Centre. The primary role of the Executive Committee (EC) is to review and make recommendations to GC on matters concerning the management and operation of the Centre's activities. It is also responsible to provide guidance to the Centre on implementation of the policies and decisions. The Technical Committee (TC) is to provide technical advice on professional matters concerning work plans and strategies for implementation of the CIRDAP activities, and the interrelationships and coordination of activities carried out by the Centre under auspices of the member countries.

POLICY BODIES OF CIRDAP



Secretariat

A full-time Director General, selected by the Governing Council for a four-year term is the chief executive of the organization. The work of the Centre is directed by the Director General in accordance with the policy and decisions adopted by the Governing Council under the guidance of the Executive Committee. Under the leadership of Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, who is an esteemed professional with over 35 years of experience in Agricultural Extension, Agri-Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Rural Development, and Public-Private Partnerships, the Secretariat plays a crucial role in managing programs, fostering regional cooperation, and promoting innovative approaches to sustainable rural development.

CIRDAP Footprints of 46 Years Key Achievements

- From 1990s to 2020, CIRDAP has raised fund more than \$2 million USD through training and research projects
- The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific UNESCAP has recognized CIRDAP as one of its Network Centres of Excellence in Research and Training of Human Resource Development (HRD)
- CIRDAP is also a member of the Council of Advocates for World Micro-credit Summit Campaign
- CIRDAP was designated as the UN focal point institution for PopMap training in the region.

Human Resource development

CIRDAP has been conducting Training Programmes, Exposure visits, Workshops, Research, Pilot Project, Consultative Conference/Policy Dialogue, Dissemination of Information etc., with the aim of capacity building in integrated rural development in Asia and the Pacific region. Since CIRDAP's inception in 1979, more than seven thousand people have participated and benefited in training and research activities. Many alumni are now leaders and senior officials in government, development agencies, academia and research institutes contributing to welfare of rural communities.

CIRDAP Contribution: At a Glance

International Training Programmes completed – 255
International Executives Trained – 7848
Research and Action Research Projects completed - 212
Partners – 54

CIRDAP Research Programs - In search of Innovative Good Practices by Empowering Rural Communities

CIRDAP has implemented 212 Research and Action Research Projects across its member countries from 1979 to 2025, aligned with its Strategic Plan. Research Projects focus on improving the livelihoods of rural marginalized communities. Ongoing research projects include:

- Gender Responsive Budgeting in Nepal
- Inclusion of Transgender and Gender-Variant Youth for Rural Development in India
- Sericulture Value Chain in IR Iran
- Women and Youth Empowerment for Inclusive Development in Sri Lanka

These initiatives are executed in collaboration with national institutions such as Local Development

Training Academy (LDTA) - Nepal, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) - India, Agricultural Planning, Economic and Rural Development Research Institute (APERDRI) - IR Iran, and Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute (HARTI) - Sri Lanka.

CIRDAP Capacity Building Programs - Empowering Professionals, Institutions and Policies to empower Rural Communities

CIRDAP has conducted 255 International Training Programs, Covering 7,848+ International Executives across member states. Training Programs are tailored to Policy Makers, Administrators, Academicians and Rural Development Practitioners. Upcoming training Programs include:

- Institutional Innovations in Rural Development (India)
- Agri-Cooperatives and Startups (Thailand)
- Digital Marketing in Rural Development (India)
- CIRDAP Knowledge Circuit (Myanmar)

Training programs emphasize:

- Rural Development Models
- Institutional Capacity Building
- Technical Proficiency for Professionals
- Policy Reforms for Policy Makers

Trainings are conducted across member countries on a rotational basis through CIRDAP's Link Institutions. Faculty development is also a strategic priority for CIRDAP. The organization enhances the capacities of its own experts and those of its Link Institutions to improve implementation of IRD Models.

Integrated Rural Development (IRD) Models – Strengthening Systems for Rural Development

Integrated Rural Development (IRD) has been one of the major rural development strategies in Asia and the Pacific countries since the last four decades. Through experimentation with rural development projects pioneered by different countries, characterized by pragmatic adaptation to local conditions, several concepts, philosophies and models have been successfully applied for improving livelihoods, reducing poverty and increasing food security of rural people.

CIRDAP established CIRDAP Exhibition and Museum on Integrated Rural Development in Asia-Pacific (CEMIRD) to showcase best practices on integrated rural development (IRD) models from CIRDAP member countries in both physically and digitally

A major mandate of CEMIRD is to identify and disseminate IRD models developed through member country initiatives. Key milestones:

- 11 IRD Models showcased at the CIRDAP Exhibition and Museum on IRD (CEMIRD)
- 35 IRD Models are under process of being compiled into a comprehensive Handbook on IRD Models
- Disseminated through Social Media Channels and CIRDAP Bulletin.

These models offer pragmatic solutions adapted to local contexts to improve livelihoods and food security.



CIRDAP Webinar Series – Gathering and Sharing Knowledge

CIRDAP is regularly organizing Webinars by eminent professionals on current relevant issues in Rural Development for the benefit of CIRDAP member countries. Through the CIRDAP Knowledge Series, the organization has hosted 45 high-impact webinars led by global experts on:

'Secondary Agriculture: How to make a beginning – Policies, Programmes and Innovations'

Thursday, May 11, 2025

11:00 AM (Bangladesh Time)
10:30 AM (India Time)

Click here for zoom link

**Honorable Speaker
Dr. Ashok Dalwai**
Chairman, Prime Minister
Committee on Doubling of
Farmers' Income, Ministry of
Agriculture, Govt. of India, IAS
Officer (Retd.)

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

Organized by
CIRDAP
info@cirdap.org

Website
www.cirdap.org

Coordinator
Mr. Harin Tiwari
communications@info@cirdap.org

- Climate Action
- Rural innovation
- Gender inclusion
- Community resilience
- Agricultural entrepreneurship and many more.

These are accessible to stakeholders across all member countries to encourage policy dialogue and skill exchange. Access recordings on CIRDAP's YouTube Channel. Publication on Policy Implications of the Webinars on CIRDAP Member Countries is in Progress.

CIRDAP Publications – Messengers of Change

CIRDAP contributes to the global rural development discourse through:

- Asia-Pacific Journal of Rural Development (APJORD): A flagship peer-reviewed Bi Annual Academic Journal.
- CIRDAP Rural Development Report (Once in two years)
- Voice of CIRDAP (Monthly E-Bulletin)



CIRDAP's Brand

All Publications reaches over 118,000 stakeholders globally. Additionally, six international publications are in progress to enhance knowledge dissemination.

CIRDAP Experts – Pooling the expertise to benefit Rural Communities

In order to avail the global expertise for assisting CIRDAP in addressing challenges in Rural Development in CIRDAP member countries, CIRDAP has created a platform to network Experts in Rural Development as CIRDAP Experts.

To strengthen technical capacity, CIRDAP maintains an Expert Database with 78 professionals across 15 nationalities. These experts:

- Contribute to publications and webinars
- Participate in project Formulation and Implementation
- Support institutional learning

CIRDAP Partnerships

CIRDAP has established 62 institutional partnerships through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) currently contributing to rural development initiatives. Partnerships enhance program implementation, resource sharing, and innovation dissemination. Focus on joint training, research, and advocacy.

CIRDAP Social Media Outreach

CIRDAP leverages social media platforms to reach a wider audience and share daily messages on CIRDAP activities and innovations. CIRDAP reorganized social media presence ensures effective communication with member countries. It has strategically strengthened its presence on digital platforms:

- Facebook: 240,000+ reach in 2024-25 through daily messages
- LinkedIn, Twitter: Active dissemination of events and knowledge resources daily
- YouTube Channel: 70 Videos and 42 recorded webinars uploaded, getting popular
- Krishi Jagran Collaboration: 3 million+ views

CIRDAP International Conference Center (CICC) – 2300 Events, 2.53 Lakh Participants

The CIRDAP International Conference Centre (CICC) is a state-of-the-art facility designed to host a wide range of events, including international and national conferences, training workshops, and official meetings.

Since its inception, CICC has become a hub for knowledge exchange and collaboration, successfully hosting over 2,300 events with the participation of more than 253,731 individuals from across the globe. This remarkable engagement highlights CICC's role as a premier venue for fostering dialogue and development on critical issues in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Conclusion and Way Forward

Since its inception, CIRDAP has achieved numerous milestones that underscore the importance of such an organization. As a pioneering institution, its mission has been to eradicate poverty and address development challenges through integrated rural development not only within the Asia-Pacific region but also beyond its

immediate sphere.

Over the years, many notable personalities, rural development practitioners, and researchers have been associated with the Centre. Their efforts have touched the lives of thousands of rural and marginalized people across Asia and around the world.

As history shapes the present, and the present guides the future, CIRDAP must look ahead with renewed purpose. The journey does not end here. As a way forward, CIRDAP is committed to strengthening partnerships with its member countries, knowledge institutions, stakeholders, and experts and national/international organizations. The Centre will continue to foster collaboration in key areas such as Digital knowledge sharing, Women's Empowerment, Nutrition, Secondary Agriculture, Rural Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Climate Change, and Disaster Management etc.

Upholding its vision as a **Centre of Excellence**, CIRDAP pledges to move forward with even greater resolve, guided by knowledge and commitment. On this auspicious occasion of the **World Rural Development Day**, CIRDAP reaffirms its promise to "leave no one behind" in the pursuit of the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

