
IFRTD'S REGIONAL WORK

IFRTD Asia and Pacific

IFRTD has had an active, strong and committed network in the Asia region for many years, with its membership of individuals, National Forum Groups (NFGs) and strategic partners still growing. In 2009, work started to explore how to include countries in the Pacific region in IFRTD's work.

National Forum Groups (NFGs) are national networks that subscribe to the vision and mission of the IFRTD. They vary in their organisational composition, but typically include representatives of government, multilateral and bilateral agencies, universities and local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka all have established NFGs in South Asia, as have Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines in South East Asia.

IFRTD Asia and Pacific (AP) lobbies for better policies to develop rural communities through improved mobility and access. The network is involved in drafting national transport policy documents, with strategic partners helping to provide evidence in these processes. Some members advocate for improved mobility and accessibility for vulnerable communities, such as people with disabilities or those isolated by social status or difficult terrain. Others work at the grassroots level, developing and implementing projects such as community-managed transport initiatives.

Regional snapshot, current trends

- IFRTD AP is a member of the Clean Air Initiative (CAI) Asia, and is advocating for the importance of rural transport in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- IFRTD AP is working with international and regional disability networks and organisations.
- Two flagship workshops in the region have helped increase the profile of rural transport issues: Gender, Economic Integration and Cross-border Road Infrastructure Development in collaboration with AIT; and Transport in Mountains in collaboration with the NFRTD.

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IFRTD East and Southern Africa

IFRTD's regional network in East and Southern Africa (IFRTD ESA) was established in 2002. It has employed a productive twin strategy of engaging in small groundbreaking pieces of research and developing policy dialogues in different countries.

The ESA region has been particularly successful in forming strong ongoing partnerships at the national, regional and international levels. This approach has produced some clear advocacy wins, such as lobbying work in Kenya that led directly to the removal of VAT on imported bicycles.

Countries in the East and Southern Africa region with active NFGs: Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, , South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Regional snapshot: current trends

Three issues that are critical to the pro-poor and inclusive transport agenda form the core of IFRTD's research, networking, communication and policy engagement in the region today:

- Developing an advocacy platform around the issue of transport and access to health,
- Strengthening links between rural transport and agricultural development, and
- Spearheading an international process to identify the most critical aspects of road safety and security.

The IFRTD ESA network is also focusing on regenerating membership, especially to engage young and upcoming researchers to take an interest in rural transport and development issues.

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IFRTD West and Central Africa

The work of IFRTD West and Central Africa (IFRTD WCA) started in the late 1990s.

Countries in the West and Central Africa region with active NFGs: , Burkina Faso, Cameroon, , Côte d'Ivoire, D R Congo, Guinea Conarky, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, I and Togo.

Safety and security is a key issue for the region and for IFRTD WCA. Other regional thematic interests include decentralisation, agriculture and livelihoods, labour-based approaches, rural road funds for construction and maintenance, vulnerable groups and the rural economy.

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IFRTD Latin America

Since the IFRTD regional network for Latin America (IFRTDAL) was established in 1999, it has been characterised by a vibrant and dedicated network of members.

Since the establishment of the initial NFG in Colombia, groups are now active in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

In recent years, there has been a particular focus on the needs of low-density isolated rural communities. The mobility and access of remote communities has been affected by insufficient cross-sectoral coordination and various degrees of decentralisation. A combination of international research programmes, regional awareness raising workshops and national advocacy strategies has enabled IFRTDAL members to bring these issues to the forefront of the public debate.

Current trends: a regional snapshot

- **Colombia:** A long history of innovative and pioneering research on rural transport issues has gained the Grupo de Transporte Rural y Desarrollo de la Orinoquia (TRADO) official recognition as a research group by the renowned Colombian Institute for the Development of Sciences (Colciencias). This is allowing TRADO to obtain funding and continue with its fresh approach to research and advocacy work.
- **Mexico & Bolivia:** Through collaboration with the World Road Association (PIARC), IFRTDAL members are providing specific inputs on sustainable rural transport and accessibility issues at international events.
- **Argentina:** Following the Mobility and Health research programme, members are engaging with the authorities to advocate for an inter-sectoral approach to access and for transport to be considered as a right of inclusion.
- **Paraguay:** In 2009, the Paraguay NFG organised a key national symposium on rural transport. This led to continued engagement with local government and the ability to raise awareness of the importance of rural transport across a variety of sectors.

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