

Where data meets the land: how climate adaptation is reshaping the Central Danube Region in Hungary

A storytelling article about the Climate_CRICES Pilot Actions in Hungary

The Central Danube Priority Area (CDPA) is located in an ecologically and economically vulnerable region. Out of its 99 municipalities, 53 belong to one of four historic wine regions (Tolna, Szekszárd, Kunság, and Hajós-Baja) in Hungary. However, the land that once yielded bountiful harvests is now under environmental pressure along the Danube.



Climate change is putting local agriculture under increasing pressure. Hotter days, longer dry periods and declining soil moisture are becoming more common, while intense rainfall can cause flash floods and inland excess water.

Before the pilot, regional development documents recognised these challenges, but they addressed them separately. Viticulture was mainly considered from an agricultural or tourism perspective, while flood-prone areas were primarily addressed through flood prevention. What was missing was a data-driven, integrated climate adaptation approach for agriculture and land use.



Through the Interreg Central Europe Climate_CRICES project, the Central Danube Development Agency (CDDA) worked to turn climate data into practical information for regional planning. Using the Climate_CRICES Dashboard, together with national databases such as KLIMADAT, the pilot analysed climate risks and translated the findings into concrete adaptation measures.



Pilot Action Kick-off Event in Kiskőrös

The work focused on three key areas:

- Heat and drought - climate risks and adaptation options for viticulture
- Water shortage and flooding - managing the increasing combination of water excess and water scarcity
- Biodiversity - using nature-based solutions to make agriculture more resilient

The pilot brought together national, regional and local stakeholders, including: winegrowers and representatives of the wine community, agricultural farmers,





Stakeholder meeting in Dunaújváros



National Chamber of Agriculture Conference

municipalities and decision-makers, water management experts, regional and national agricultural organisations. Stakeholders first met in Kiskőrös in February 2026, followed by a national presentation at the National Chamber of Agriculture Conference in May and a regional workshop at the University of Dunaújváros in the summer. One moment during a Kiskőrös workshop captured the value of the pilot particularly well. A winemaker looked at the projected decline in soil moisture on the Climate_CRICES Dashboard. The visualisation changed the conversation: the discussion moved from whether climate change was happening to what could be done to adapt to it. “We are no longer debating whether climate change is



happening - we are in it and have to think about how we can cope with it.”

The pilot created a direct link between climate science, local knowledge and regional policy planning. The analysis identified practical measures such as: improved soil and water management, targeted irrigation and canopy management, climate-resilient grape varieties, water retention and wetland restoration, more resilient farming practices, biodiversity-friendly vineyard management, including grass-covered inter-rows and hedgerows.

The work produced three strategic Addendums covering heat and drought, water shortage and flooding, and biodiversity. These technical documents provide concrete recommendations that can be incorporated into regional development documents. The most important result is not only the collected data itself, but the evidence-based framework for turning climate information into policy action. Stakeholders gained practical experience using the Climate_CRICES Dashboard, while the Addendums provide specific wording and measures that can be directly integrated into regional planning. Following stakeholder validation in October 2026, the pilot's findings are expected to feed into the review of the Central Danube Priority Area's regional development document in 2027.

