

Good Practice Example No. 4 - Hungary

ARCCHAD: Supporting climate-resilient small-scale farming through innovation and cross-border cooperation

Industry:	Agricultural advisory services and rural development
Location:	Bács-Kiskun County, Hungary
Established in:	2024
Legal form:	Nonprofit Limited Liability Company
Business model:	Publicly funded cross-border development initiative
Core activity:	Climate-resilient farming support

The ARCCHAD (Solutions for Small Farmers Facing Climate Change Challenges) project is an innovative cross-border initiative implemented under the Interreg IPA VI-A Hungary–Serbia Programme. Running between 2024 and 2026, the project is led by the Central Danube Development Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (Közép-Duna Menti Fejlesztési Ügynökség Nonprofit Kft. / KDMFÜ) in partnership with the National Association of Small-Scale Producers and Service Providers in Hungary, the Zenta Gardeners Association, and the Business Academy University in Novi Sad.

The project addresses one of the most pressing challenges facing agriculture today: the increasing vulnerability of small-scale farms to climate change. Family farms play a crucial role in maintaining rural livelihoods, local food production, and regional traditions throughout the Hungarian-Serbian border region. However, many of these farms continue to rely on traditional production methods and business practices that are becoming less effective in the face of droughts, heatwaves, floods, and rapidly changing market conditions. The ARCCHAD project was created to help these producers adapt by combining technological innovation, capacity building, and cross-border knowledge exchange.

Testing innovative solutions through pilot farms

A central element of the project is the establishment of four pilot farms, two in Hungary and two in Serbia, which serve as demonstration sites for innovative agricultural solutions. These farms are selected based on their willingness to test new technologies, management approaches, and market-oriented innovations. Following a comprehensive needs assessment, the project identifies suitable agro-digital tools and service providers capable of supporting small-scale farmers. The selected technologies are tested under real farming conditions, allowing participants to evaluate their practical applicability, economic benefits, and contribution to climate resilience. The results are documented

and shared through practical guidelines and handbooks, ensuring that successful solutions can be replicated by other farmers in the region.

Digital transformation and climate adaptation in agriculture

One of the project's key contributions is the promotion of digitalization as a tool for climate adaptation. Small-scale farms often have limited access to modern technologies and advisory services despite being among the most vulnerable to climate-related risks. The ARCCHAD project addresses this gap by introducing farmers to agro-digital solutions that support more informed decision-making, resource management, and production planning. By increasing awareness of digital tools and demonstrating their practical value, the project helps farmers improve efficiency, strengthen resilience, and reduce the risks associated with increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. The initiative demonstrates that digital innovation can be accessible not only to large agricultural enterprises but also to small family farms, helping bridge the technology gap that often limits rural development.

Strengthening local food systems and rural entrepreneurship

Beyond technological innovation, the ARCCHAD project places significant emphasis on the development of resilient local food systems and diversified rural economies. The project partners jointly analyse existing food supply chains and local food networks in the cross-border region in order to identify opportunities for improvement. Training activities introduce farmers to innovative business models, alternative marketing channels, solidarity-based food supply systems, and supplementary economic activities such as agritourism. These approaches help farmers reduce their dependence on traditional production models while creating new income opportunities and strengthening connections between producers and consumers. By supporting both economic diversification and community-based food systems, the project contributes to the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of rural areas.

Cross-border learning and capacity building

Knowledge transfer is a fundamental component of the ARCCHAD methodology. Farmers from Hungary and Serbia participate in joint workshops, training sessions, and study visits that encourage the exchange of experiences and best practices. A study tour to Austria provides participants with direct exposure to innovative farming techniques, digital solutions, and successful diversification strategies. Through these activities, farmers gain access to practical knowledge that can be adapted to local conditions while simultaneously building professional networks that extend beyond national borders. This collaborative approach strengthens the innovation capacity of rural communities and promotes long-term cooperation between stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

Building resilience for the future of small-scale farming

The ARCCHAD project demonstrates that climate resilience cannot be achieved through technological innovation alone. Sustainable adaptation requires a combination of digital tools, entrepreneurial thinking, knowledge transfer, community cooperation, and access to new market opportunities. By integrating pilot actions, training programmes, local food system development, and cross-border collaboration into a single framework, the project offers a comprehensive model for supporting small-scale farmers in a rapidly changing environment. For students and future agricultural professionals, the ARCCHAD project provides an excellent example of how innovation, cooperation, and sustainability can be combined to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of rural economies while helping farming communities prepare for the challenges of climate change.

Source: <https://kdmfu.hu/en/arcchad-en/>