



REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMBATING DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT:

Enhancing Agricultural Resilience to Extreme Weather Events through Natural/Small Water Retention Measures

We are pleased to invite you to the OPTAIN Continental Regional Dialogue Conference on combating desertification and drought with a focus on enhancing agricultural resilience through Natural/Small Water Retention Measures (NSWRMs).

The Conference will be held on 22nd May while linked to the upcoming International Desertification and Drought Day 2025. A section is devoted to examples of national implementation of the UNCCD followed by the OPTAIN regional dialogue. As part of OPTAIN's regional dialogues, this event serves as the Pannonian exchange platform along with Continental and Boreal biogeographic regions.

Bringing together policy-makers, researchers, practitioners, and civil society, supporting the integration of NSWRMs into water and land management policies and practices. The aim is knowledge exchange on how to align national and EU policies, promote strategic implementation of NSWRMs, and build collaborative capacity for climate adaptation and sustainable agricultural development in the Pannonian biogeographic region.

The hybrid conference is organised by the HUN-REN Centre for Agricultural Research (ATK) and the General Directorate of Water Management (OVF), in collaboration with OPTAIN project partners in Hungary. This conference provides an opportunity to address extreme weather impacts and promote NSWRMs to enhance water and retention measures in agricultural landscapes.

Participation in this event is open, however, registration is required via this link:

<https://forms.gle/AHeDEuZnRj7XjhB38>

Onsite registration deadline: May 9, 2025

Online registration deadline: May 14, 2025

Sincerely,

Dr. Brigitta Szabó

Senior Research Associate
HUN-REN Centre for Agricultural Research
Institute for Soil Sciences

Péter Molnár

Head of Department
Irrigation Management Department
General Directorate of Water Management, Hungary



8:30-9:00 Registration

9:00-9:15

- ◆ **Welcome speech** - Molnár, Péter – Head of the Department of Irrigation, General Directorate of Water Management (HU)
- ◆ **Official opening of the Conference** - Ministry of Agriculture (HU)
- ◆ **Regional dialogues as part of the OPTAIN project** - Volk, Martin – Head of the Department of Computational Landscape Ecology, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ (DE)

9:15-10:35 Presentations on the topic of "Desertification and drought"

Moderator: Molnár, Péter (General Directorate of Water Management, HU)

- ◆ Szamosvári, István - General Directorate of Water Management, Water Management, Drainage and Irrigation Division (HU): Territorial water management activity of the governmental water sector: agenda, challenges and good practices in retention and resupplying of waters and battling droughts
- ◆ Domián, Ildikó - Ministry of Agriculture (HU): Assessing farmers' willingness to retain water in low-lying areas with potential for water retention
- ◆ Kavakli Karatas, Zehra - Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change (TR): National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Desertification Türkiye
- ◆ Medina Vidal, María - Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (ES): Spain's National Strategy to Combat Desertification and its Implementation Plans
- ◆ National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Desertification in Italy
- ◆ Q&A

10:35-10:50 Coffee break 🕒

10:50-12:10 Presentations on "NSWRMs related research projects"

Moderator: Witing, Felix (Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, Department of Computational Landscape Ecology, DE)

- ◆ Lemann, Tatenda - University of Bern, Center for Development and Environment (CDE)(CH): From local documentation to global accessibility: Knowledge management and best practice sharing of Natural/Small Water Retention measures for combating desertification and drought
- ◆ Glavan, Matjaz - University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Agronomy Department (SI): Impact of different tillage systems on soil water availability and erosion potential in agricultural catchments, Example from Slovenia
- ◆ Szabó, Brigitta - HUN-REN Centre for Agricultural Research, Institute for Soil Sciences (HU): Assessing Natural/Small Water Retention Measures for Water and Nutrient Management in the Pannonian Region (present modelling results)
- ◆ Fucik, Petr - Research Institute for Soil and Water Conservation (CZ): Efficiency of NSWRM in relation with land drainage – results and experience from Czechia
- ◆ Q&A

**12:10-13:10 Lunch break** 🕒**13:10-14:30 Presentations on "NSWRMs in practice"**

Moderator: Lábdy, Jenő (General Directorate of Water Management, HU)

- ◆ Volpi, Danila - European Commission Joint Research Centre (EU): Advancing drought preparedness: integrating monitoring, forecasting and impact-based risk assessment
- ◆ Farkas, Mátyás - WWF Hungary Foundation (HU): From conceptualization to operation: 7 years of experience from planning and implementing NWRMs in Hungary
- ◆ Kramberger, Gregor - Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (KGZS), Institute of Agriculture and Forestry Maribor (SI): Pesnica and Kobiljski Potok Case Studies on NSWRMs in Slovenian Agriculture
- ◆ Cserneczky, Tamás - Collectivo Szakértői Kft. (HU): The water retention and the big picture through the evaluator's eye
- ◆ Q&A

14:30-14:45 Coffee break 🕒**14:45-16:05 Presentations on "NSWRMs in policy"**

Moderator: Kovács, Péter (General Directorate of Water Management, HU)

- ◆ Juhász, Anikó - Deputy State Secretary responsible for Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture (HU): CAP measures and international positions
- ◆ Rouillard, Josselin - Ecologic Institute (DE): The EU Common Agricultural Policy and NWRM - an overview at EU level
- ◆ Kovács, Ádám - International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (IO): It Takes Two to Tango: Aligning Water and Agriculture in the Danube River Basin
- ◆ Xenophontos, Marina - European Commission, Directorate General for the Environment, Nature Conservation (EU): Habitats and Birds Directives (policies) - relation to nature protection and their role in enhancing water and nutrient retention
- ◆ Q&A

16:05-16:15 Technical break 🕒**16:15-17:15 "Panel discussion on NSWRMs implementation, effectiveness and policy"**

Moderator: Bíró, Tibor (Ludovika University of Public Service, HU)

- ◆ Madarász, István - Ministry of Agriculture (HU)
- ◆ Harsányi, Gábor - Central Tisza Region Water Directorate (HU)
- ◆ Kajner, Péter - World Wildlife Found Hungary (HU)
- ◆ Szabó, Levente - KITE Zrt. (HU)

17:15-17:25: Closing of the Regional Dialogues