

How to Run a Field Day that Changes Farming Practice

A practical guide to field observation, farmer dialogue and action



Co-funded by
the European Union



How to Run a Field Day that Changes Farming Practice

A practical field day guide to field observation, farmer dialogue and action developed within the Erasmus+

Regenerative practices for sustainable farming, biodiversity and carbon sequestration in soil

www.rege-farms.eu

Version 1.0, September 2026

Prepared by:

Živá Záhrada, Slovakia

Carboneg Institute, Czechia

Regenerative Farmers Association of Hungary

Meridaunia, Italy

Biopikilo, Greece

REGE-FARMS is an Erasmus+ project co-funded by the EU. Its goal is to support farmers in improving soil health, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration, while strengthening climate resilience and the long-term sustainability of farming systems. The project aims to accelerate the transition to regenerative agriculture across Europe by empowering farmers with practical knowledge, tools, and real-world examples through a combination of digital training resources, case studies, and hands-on field days.

Project number: 2025-1-SK01-KA220-VET-000362255

Co-Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0).

Address feedbacks to lucia.balak@zivazahrada.sk.

INTRODUCTION

How to run a regenerative agriculture field day that changes practice

Most field days inform. Few change practices.

This is a practical, replicable guide for **designing regenerative agriculture field days** that lead to **real change on farms** and contribute to **healthier agricultural landscapes**. It provides a clear, step-by-step framework for preparing, delivering, and following up on on-farm demonstration events, with a **strong focus on making soil health visible**, facilitating **honest farmer-to-farmer dialogue**, and **translating learning into concrete next steps**.

It is **designed for farmers, advisors, trainers, agricultural and vocational organizations, regional development actors, environmental NGOs, public bodies, and all stakeholders working to improve soil health** and promote regenerative agriculture in practice.

This Guide does not prescribe one regenerative model. It supports context-specific decision-making grounded in soil observation and practical farm realities.

This document was developed within the Erasmus+ project *Regenerative practices for sustainable farming, biodiversity and carbon sequestration in soil*, no. 2025-1-SK01-KA220-VET-000362255, co-financed by the European Union.

Additional resources, case studies, infographics, and field day updates are available at www.rege-farms.eu



Multi-stakeholder field day discussion — Eko-Rege u Petra farm, Dežerice, March 2025

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Introduction.....	2
Content Overview	3
How to Use This Guide	5
How to Build the Field Day Team	6
How to Attract Participants.....	8
How to Finance a Field Day.....	9
Six Steps to a Successful Field Day	10
STEP 1 Focus: Choose one clear topic.....	12
What will the field day be really about?.....	12
Decide what people can see, feel, and try.....	13
STEP 2 Evidence: Show the soil, don't just talk about it	14
Soil Must Be Visible	14
Prepare the Field Demonstrations	15
Soil Profile Demonstration Example	16
STEP 3 Experience: Let the Field Do the Teaching.....	17
Structure the Day Around Field Observations and Live Demonstrations	17
Use Comparison to Make Differences Visible	18
Design a Realistic Time Structure	19
STEP 4 Dialogue: Encourage Honest, Practical Conversation.....	20
Speak Honestly About Trade-Offs.....	20
Manage Group Dynamics.....	21
STEP 5 Decision: Connect to real farm costs and risks.....	22
Understanding the Benefits and Risks of Regenerative Practices.....	23
Link Soil Health to Farm Economics.....	24
Use Simple Indicators.....	24
STEP 6 Action: Turn ideas into Action.....	25
Reflection at the End of the Field Day	25
Ending the Day With a Clear Next Step.....	26
Follow Up Within 30 Days	27

Common Field Day Mistakes to Avoid	28
Repeat and Scale	29
From Field Day to Regional Regenerative Network	30
Toolkit and Annexes Overview	31
Annex 1 – Host Preparation Checklist	32
Annex 2 – Field Day Agenda Templates	33
HALF-DAY FIELD DAY (3–4 hours)	33
FULL-DAY FIELD DAY (5–7 hours)	34
Annex 3 – Soil Observation Guides	35
Annex 4 – Next Step Planning Template	36
Annex 5 – Communication and Follow-Up	37
Annex 6 – Feedback Form	38
Annex 7 – Field Day Documentation Sheet	39
REGE-FARMS Partners in Practice	40
Continue Learning with REGE-FARMS	40



Soil profile observation — Agromap farm, Krutenice, June 2026

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This Guide helps plan and run field days. It follows the natural flow of a field day:

- Choose a clear focus
- Observe the field
- Discuss practical implications
- Close with next steps and follow-up.

You can use individual sections as needed or use the whole Guide as a complete resource.

Its approach is flexible. Each chapter builds on the previous one. At the same time, all topics and tools in the Annexes can be used independently.

Keep it simple.

A strong field day does not need many topics or complex presentations. It needs to be relevant to the audience, honest and practical.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is consistency — small improvements, repeated over time.

Using this Guide, you will be able to:

- Organize a focused regenerative field day
- Make soil health and processes visible and understandable
- Facilitate honest, practice-based discussion
- Turn learning into action



HOW TO BUILD THE FIELD DAY TEAM

A field day is most impactful when different actors cooperate and the event follows a clear learning process from topic and soil observation to comparison, conversation, trial, follow-up, and adoption.



Multi-stakeholder discussion — Regenerative Farmers Association of Hungary

Which key actors help make field days practical and useful?

What does each role contribute to the field day?

HOST / FARMER

- Shares real farming experience
- Shows farm and soil conditions
- Explains what changed over time and why
- Answers practical farmer questions openly
- Keeps the focus on farming results, soil health, practices, and lessons learned

Farmers learn fastest from other farmers



ADVISOR / FACILITATOR / TRAINER

- Guides attention toward what matters
- Connects soil health to decision options
- Shares examples from other farms
- Translates observations into practical choices and economic implications
- Helps identify realistic next steps

Good facilitation keeps the day focused



ORGANIZER / NETWORK / INSTITUTION

- Brings together farmers and local actors
- Organizes logistics, communication, and follow-up
- Connects participants to advisory services, funding, and networks
- Supports continuation beyond one event
- Helps spread successful practices regionally

Strong networks help practices spread



TECHNICAL DEMONSTRATION PARTNER

- Demonstrates machinery in the field
- Explains setup, operation, and limitations
- Shows how equipment fits local conditions
- Helps evaluate costs and labor
- Helps reduce uncertainty around adoption

Seeing equipment reduces uncertainty



CONSUMER / FOOD BUSINESS

- Purchases regenerative products
- Creates market demand
- Connects farms with local markets
- Shares market expectations
- Supports short supply and value chains

Demand supports regenerative transition



One person may fulfill several roles during a field day, but field days are often more effective when at least two people are involved – for example a farmer and an advisor or facilitator.

HOW TO ATTRACT PARTICIPANTS

A successful field day is not about attracting the largest audience. It is about bringing together the right participants.

1. Identify Your Audience

- Farmers
- Advisors and trainers
- Students and VET providers
- Researchers
- Public authorities and municipalities
- NGOs
- Food businesses and buyers

2. Use Trusted Networks

- Farmer groups and demonstration farms
- AKIS networks and advisory services
- Agricultural organizations
- Partner organizations
- Municipalities and local action groups
- Schools and universities

3. Promote the Event

Keep communication simple and practical:

- Social media
- Newsletters
- Websites
- Local media
- Direct invitations by email or phone
- Word of mouth

4. Explain the Value

Tell participants exactly what they will:

- Observe
- Compare
- Discuss
- Learn
- Test in practice

A clear topic and practical demonstrations attract more participants than a general invitation.



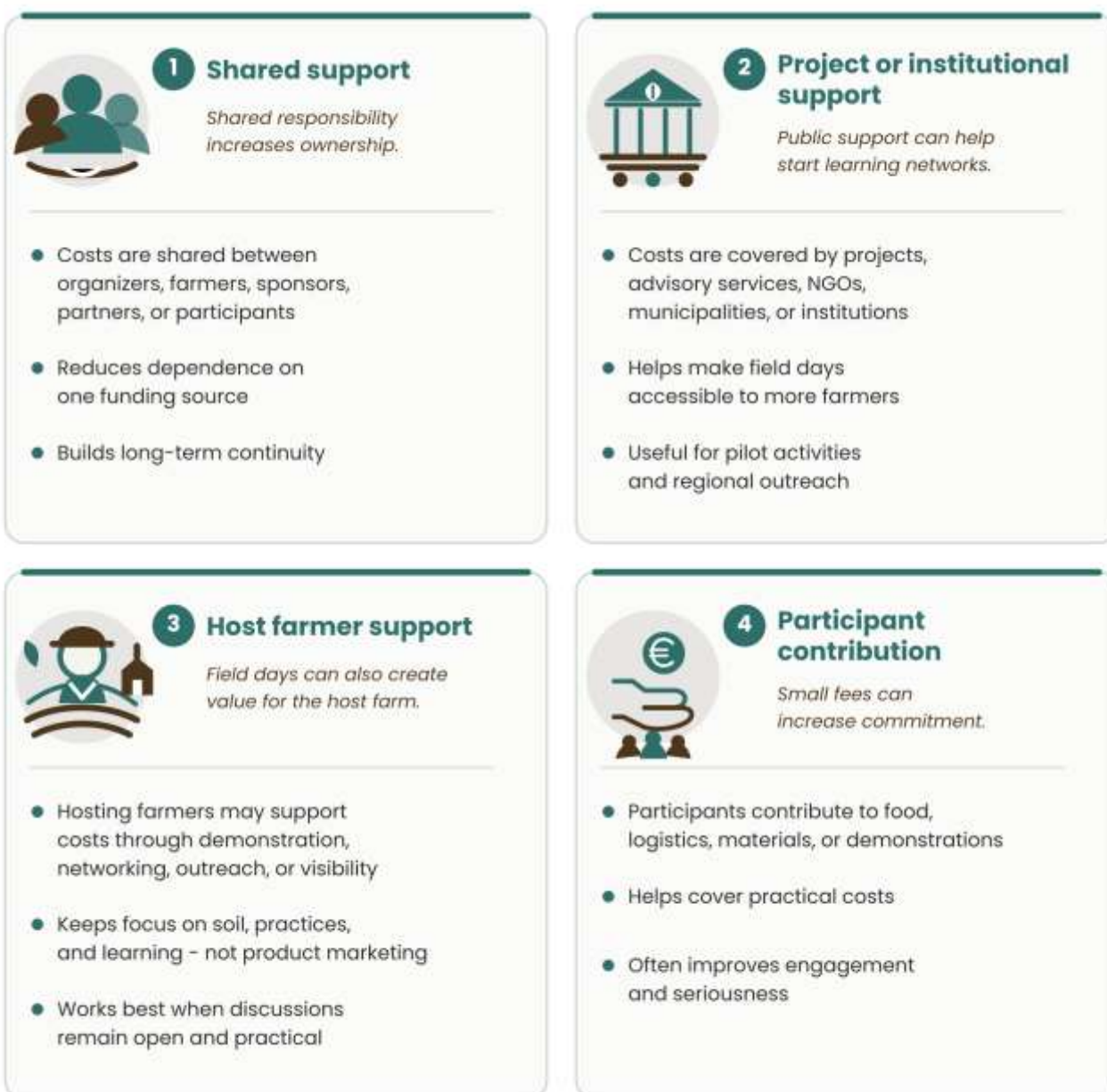
Observing soil cover and discussing water management — Terre di Vallebona, June 2026

HOW TO FINANCE A FIELD DAY

Good field days do not need expensive setups.

What matters most is a clear focus, practical examples, and shared responsibility.

However, there are four common approaches to finance a field day. They can be combined and may include financial support, shared costs, or in-kind contributions such as time, equipment, materials, logistics, or use of the farm.



Different financing models can be combined depending on the scale, audience, and goals of the field day.

SIX STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL FIELD DAY

A successful field day is more than a demonstration. It is a learning process that helps participants move from observation to action.

The process typically begins with a clear topic and direct observation of soil and field conditions. Participants compare different management approaches, discuss practical experiences and challenges, and explore the costs, benefits, and risks of possible actions.

The field day then supports participants in identifying realistic next steps, encourages follow-up and peer exchange, and ultimately helps translate learning into the adoption of new practices on the farm.

While the exact sequence may vary, effective field days create a pathway from seeing and understanding to testing and implementation.



These six steps will help you organize practical and effective field days.



FOCUS

Choose one clear topic
Keep the field day focused on one practical challenge.

- ✓ Decide what this field day is really about. A clear focus aligns everything: what people see, discuss, and take home.



EVIDENCE

Show the soil
Make soil processes visible and easy to observe.

- ✓ Make soil processes visible and tangible. If people don't see and touch it, regeneration remains abstract.



EXPERIENCE

Let the field teach
Use real observations and demonstrations.

- ✓ Design the day around observation and live demonstrations. People learn by seeing practices in action, not from presentations.



DIALOGUE

Encourage honest conversation
Create space for real farmer experience.

- ✓ Create space for real exchange of experiences including challenges. Trust grows when farmers speak openly about what works and what doesn't.



DECISION

Connect practices to costs and risks
Help farmers evaluate realistic next steps.

- ✓ Link what is shown to economics and feasibility. Change happens when farmers see what it means for their own operation.



ACTION

Turn ideas into next steps
Close with reflection, follow-up, and testing.

- ✓ Close with a clear next step and follow-up. Without action, even the best field day fades.

STEP 1 FOCUS: CHOOSE ONE CLEAR TOPIC

What will the field day be really about?

Field days work best when they focus on one clear farming challenge, regenerative practice or farming system adapted to local conditions. Examples of topics include:

“Cover crops in dry regions”

“Reduced tillage on heavy soils”

“Using compost to improve soil biology”

“Improving water infiltration and root growth”

Farming challenges	Commonly used regenerative practices	Main farming systems
 • Drought and climate extremes • Soil compaction and erosion • Declining soil health and biodiversity • High dependency on external inputs • Economic pressure and unstable profitability	 • Reduced tillage and direct seeding • Multi-species cover cropping • Permanent soil cover and mulching • Compost and biological amendments • Diversified crop rotations • Managed rotational grazing • Intercropping and companion planting • Biological pest and weed regulation • Compaction reduction and controlled traffic • Water retention and infiltration practices • Biodiversity zones, hedgerows and flower strips	 • Regenerative cropping systems • Regenerative grazing systems • Integrated crop–livestock systems • Regenerative orchard, vineyard and perennial systems • Diversified market garden systems

Remember: Choose one main focus for the field day. Keep it clear, local, and relevant so participants can learn, discuss, and take action.

Decide what people can see, feel, and try

A good field day:

- Not only **PRESENTS** ideas, but also helps people **SEE** clear differences.
- Not only **SHARES** information, but also helps people **UNDERSTAND** practical implications.
- Not only **INSPIRES** people, but also helps them **FEEL CONFIDENT TO TRY** something themselves.

When planning the day, ask what participants can:

- Clearly see?
- Compare?
- Discuss?
- Feel ready to test afterward?

This helps participants decide whether and how to test a new practice:

- Demonstrations
- Comparisons
- Discussion
- Economics
- Next steps

✗ Without a clear focus:

- Demonstrations become random
- Discussion loses direction
- Economics feel disconnected
- Participants leave without action



Soil profile and rooting assessment
— DVP Agro, Bratřice, July 2025

The clearer the focus, the easier it becomes to show meaningful differences in the field.



STEP 2 EVIDENCE: SHOW THE SOIL, DON'T JUST TALK ABOUT IT

Soil Must Be Visible

Principle: Farmers are more likely to trust and adopt new practices when they can see, touch, compare, and discuss what is happening below the surface. If soil is not observed directly, regeneration remains abstract.

Engage the senses: Encourage participants to see, touch, smell, and compare soils to make soil health processes tangible and easier to understand.

The goal is to make invisible soil processes visible, not to present more information.

Whenever possible, include at least one hands-on soil observation activity.

Observation guides and short videos are available for the following activities, see next page and rege-farms.eu:

- Soil pit or soil profile exploration
- Soil aggregation stability test (slake test)
- Water infiltration test
- Ground cover assessment
- Biological activity observation
- Soil compaction assessment

Additional demonstrations may include:

- Rainfall simulator
- Root observations
- Soil moisture measurements
- Comparison of regenerative and conventionally managed soils



Observing soil aggregates, earthworms and organic residues

Prepare the Field Demonstrations

Prepare at least one soil observation site to clearly demonstrate and discuss soil conditions. Where possible, **compare contrasting management systems, such as a conventionally managed field and a regenerative field, or regenerative fields at different stages of transition.**

Recommended station setup: 1 facilitator · 10–20 participants · 15–20 minutes · one guiding question · one meaningful comparison

Soil Observation Guides help facilitators structure field observations, comparisons, discussions, and interpretation of soil health indicators. They can be used individually or as a complete observation sequence, adapted to local conditions and learning objectives.

Activity	What participants observe	Basic setup
Soil profile	Layers, roots, structure and compaction	Spade or auger, tape, tray
Aggregate stability	How soil aggregates behave in water	Soil samples, jars, water
Water infiltration	How quickly water enters the soil	Ring, water, stopwatch
Ground cover	Living cover, residues and bare soil	Frame or quadrat, observation sheet
Root structure	Root depth, density and restrictions	Spade, knife, tray

Access the Soil Observation Toolkit

Printable one-page guides and short demonstration videos for every activity can be accessed at:

www.rege-farms.eu.

Rainfall simulator demonstration
— Regenerative Farmers Association of Hungary

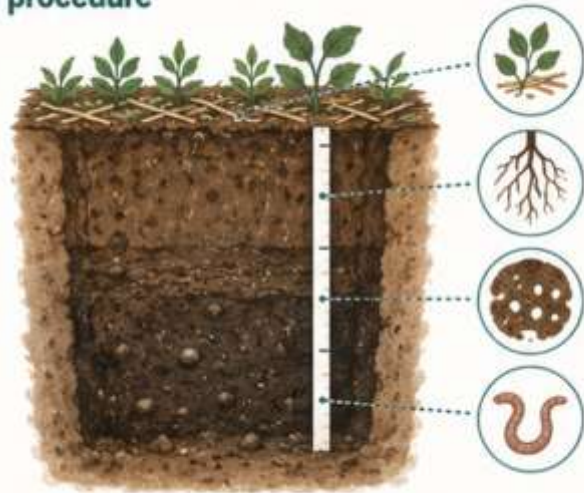


Soil Profile Demonstration Example

The example below illustrates one way to organize a soil profile demonstration. Adapt the procedure and discussion to local conditions.

Soil pit / soil profile station – practical procedure

- 1 Select two contrasting sites: one conventionally managed plot and one regeneratively managed plot.
- 2 Dig a 50–80 cm soil pit and prepare one clean vertical wall for observation. Mark the pit clearly for safety.
- 3 Observe the surface: ground cover, residues, crusting, erosion signs and earthworm casts.
- 4 Observe the profile: soil structure, pores, rooting depth, compaction layers, moisture and biological activity.
- 5 Discuss water movement and management: Would rainfall infiltrate, run off or remain available for plants? Which practices created these conditions?



Encourage participants to discuss what they see, what may have caused the differences, and which practices could be tested on their own farms.

Use **open questions** to guide observation, encourage discussion, and help participants connect visible soil conditions with practical management decisions.

Facilitation prompts



- What differences can you see between the two soil profiles?
- Where do roots stop, and why?
- What signs of biological activity are visible?
- What is one realistic change a farmer could test after this field day?



STEP 3 EXPERIENCE: LET THE FIELD DO THE TEACHING

Structure the Day Around Field Observations and Live Demonstrations

Rules to keep the day impactful:

- Keep presentations short.
- Move quickly into the field.
- Use rotation groups in case of a larger audience.
- Show practices in action, not only results (machines, applications, interventions).
- Visit multiple demonstration sites or farms if this helps compare practices and conditions.

Core field components:

- Soil observations – pit, structure, biology
- Crop and ground cover assessment
- Water dynamics – infiltration, runoff, erosion, where possible

Practice & equipment demonstrations:

- No-till drill / direct seeding
- Soil decompaction
- Cover crop establishment and termination
- Weed management
- Foliar applications, use of drone
- Equipment to prepare compost extracts, teas and biology applications

Make the Field Physically Accessible to Learning

- Ensure everyone can clearly see the demonstration – positioning, group size
- Manage movement flow between stations – avoid crowding, delays
- Keep groups small enough for interaction – ideal: 10–20 people
- Ensure audibility – voice, positioning, avoid wind/noise interference
- Design rotations where needed, with clear timing and movement between stations.

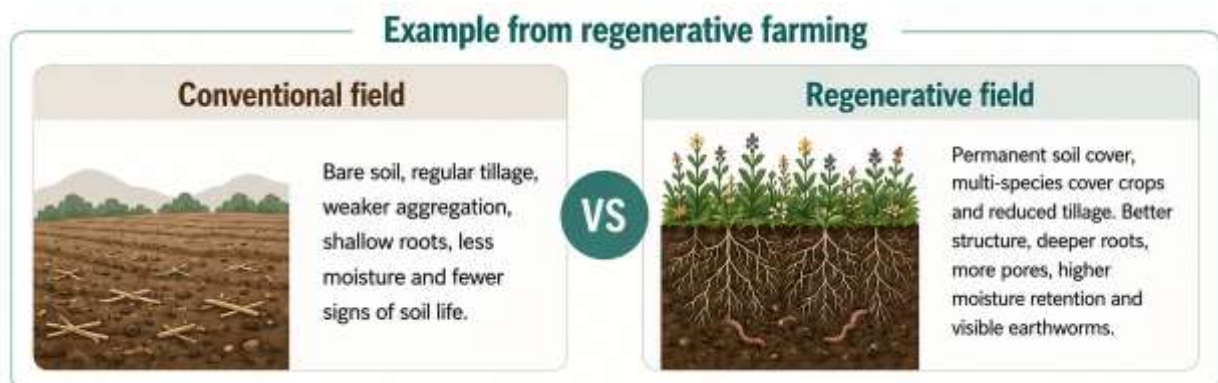


Checking soil moisture beneath mulch

Use Comparison to Make Differences Visible

Comparison makes learning real. Options:

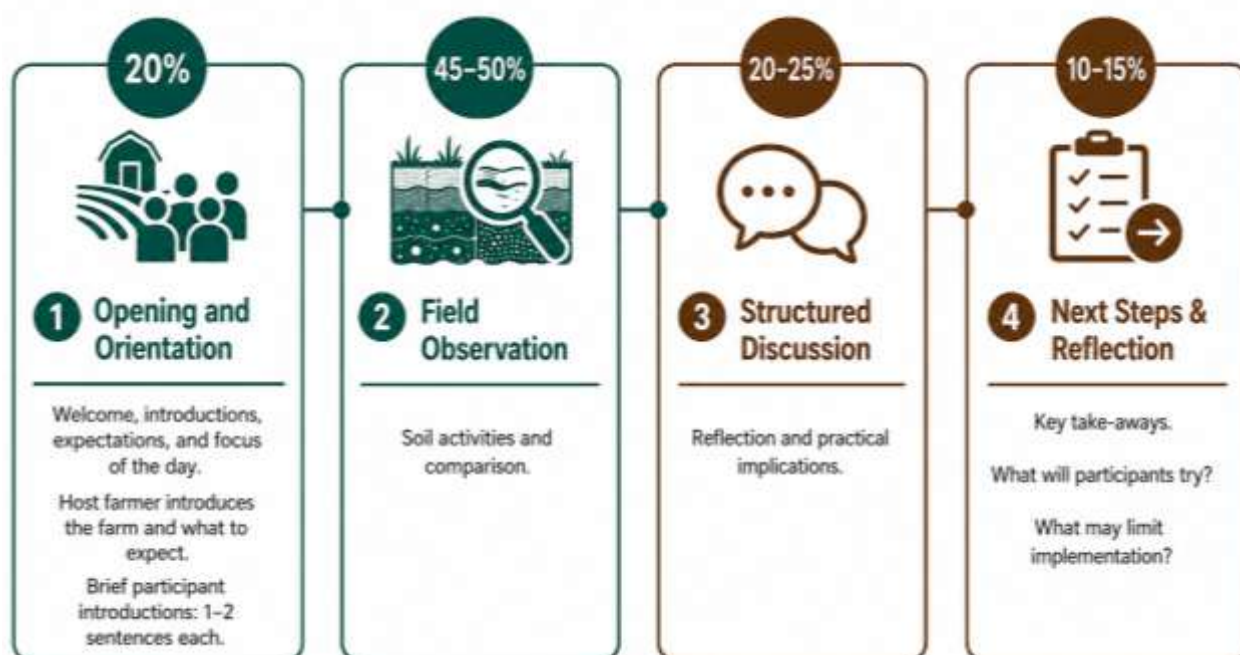
1. Side-by-side plots
2. Before/after soil samples
3. Different management blocks to show soil structure contrast



Design a Realistic Time Structure

A clear time structure helps participants stay focused, engaged and action-oriented. The following four distinct blocks each serving a particular function should be planned:

1. Opening and Orientation 20%
2. Field Observation 45 – 50%
3. Structured Discussion 20–25%
4. Next Steps & Reflection 10–15%



A more detailed half day and full day agenda template is provided in Annex 2.

STEP 4 DIALOGUE: ENCOURAGE HONEST, PRACTICAL CONVERSATION

Speak Honestly About Trade-Offs

Trust grows through transparency. Encourage participants to share concerns and perceived risks by discussing not only the benefits of regenerative practices, but also the challenges of implementation.

Be open about topics such as:

- Yield variability during transition
- Practical and economic risks associated with change
- Machinery requirements, limitations, and investment needs
- Labor capacity and management challenges, including training, adoption by staff, and changes in work routines
- Cash flow, timing of returns, and financial uncertainty

Honest discussion helps participants make informed decisions, set realistic expectations, and identify manageable first steps.



Discussing practical trade-offs — Regenerative Farmers Association of Hungary

Manage Group Dynamics

Good facilitation encourages participation, practical exchange, and peer learning. Ask open questions, avoid long lectures, and keep discussions grounded in real farming experience.

Dominant voices, silence, skepticism, conflict, late arrivals, or time pressure can all reduce the quality of discussion and learning during a field day. The following examples can help facilitators respond effectively:

Situation	Facilitator Response	Useful Phrases
Dominant voices	Acknowledge the contribution, then actively invite other participants into the discussion.	"Thank you, that is a useful perspective. Let's hear 1 or 2 others." "I'll pause you there so we can include more voices."
Silence or low participation	Start with simple observation questions and allow time for people to think before responding.	"Let's begin with what we can see — there are no wrong answers." "What do you notice first?"
Skepticism	Treat concerns as valuable input and bring the discussion back to observations and evidence.	"That is a fair concern." "Let's look at what the soil shows us." "What would make this worth testing on a small area?"
Conflict or disagreement	Slow down the discussion, maintain respect, and focus on practical decisions rather than opinions.	"Let's pause for a moment." "We may see this differently, but let's stay focused on the practical question." "What decision would a farmer need to make here?"
Running behind schedule	Acknowledge the importance of the topic, capture it for follow-up, and keep the group moving.	"This is an important topic, but we may not resolve it today." "Let's note it as a follow-up question and continue."
Late arrivals	Welcome them briefly without interrupting the flow, then integrate them at the next natural transition.	"Welcome. We're currently discussing soil structure and water movement." "We'll quickly bring you up to speed at the next stop."

Key facilitator rule: Stay calm, neutral and practical. Use the field evidence as the common reference point.

STEP 5 DECISION: CONNECT TO REAL FARM COSTS AND RISKS

Farmers rarely adopt a new practice because they receive more information. They adopt it when they can see the benefits, understand the risks, and identify a realistic first step.

A successful field day should help participants answer five practical questions:

What are the visible benefits?

Improved soil structure, deeper roots, better water infiltration, increased biological activity, improved crop performance, and greater resilience to drought or heavy rainfall.

What are the costs?

Seed, machinery, fuel, compost, labor, advisory services, contractors, and potential transition costs.

What are the savings?

Fewer tillage operations, lower fuel use, reduced input dependency, less erosion damage, improved water-use efficiency, and lower long-term production costs.

What are the risks?

Poor establishment, weed pressure, temporary yield reductions, weather-related challenges, equipment limitations, timing issues, or slower-than-expected soil improvement.

What can be tested safely?

Start small. Test one field, one paddock, one cover crop mix, one field operation, or a comparison strip before expanding further.

A field day succeeds when it reduces hesitation, not when it delivers more information.



Winter grazing — organic matter decomposition continues beneath snow cover

Understanding the Benefits and Risks of Regenerative Practices

Regenerative practices can create environmental, economic, and social benefits, but they may also involve costs, risks, and implementation challenges. Understanding both helps farmers make informed decisions and identify realistic next steps for their own conditions.

Area	Benefits	Potential Challenges and Risks
Environmental 	• Better soil structure and water infiltration • Less erosion and runoff • More biodiversity and carbon storage	• Benefits may take time to become visible • Soil improvement rates vary by site and weather • Results depend on consistent management
Economic 	• Lower dependence on external inputs • Better nutrient and water-use efficiency • Lower fuel and machinery costs • More stable yields over time	• Upfront investment in seed, equipment, or learning • Temporary yield reductions during transition • Additional management and monitoring requirements
Social 	• Greater confidence to experiment • Peer-to-peer learning and cooperation • More resilient farming communities	• Resistance to change • Lack of local examples • Fear of being the first to try something different

Uncertainty and risk are major barriers to change. Providing information alone is rarely enough.

Farmers are more likely to adopt new approaches when field days help reduce **three common forms of uncertainty and risk**:

- **Technical uncertainty:** Farmers need evidence that a practice can work. Visible field observations, soil demonstrations, and side-by-side comparisons help make results tangible and credible.
- **Financial risk:** Farmers are more willing to experiment when they can start small. Trial plots, comparison strips, and gradual implementation reduce the cost of learning.
- **Social risk:** Trying something different can feel risky. Seeing local farmers share both successes and failures helps build confidence and reduces the fear of being the first.

The goal is to create enough confidence for the participants to take the next step.

Link Soil Health to Farm Economics

Help farmers **evaluate whether a practice makes sense for their own farm**, not just whether it improves soil health.

Communicate clearly:

- What does this cost?
- What does it save?
- What risk does it reduce?

Keep it practical.

Use Simple Indicators

Where possible, use indicators that farmers can easily observe, measure, or relate to.

Examples:

- Fuel and machinery use
- Fertilizer and pesticide inputs
- Water-use efficiency
- Yield stability across seasons
- Erosion and runoff reduction
- Labor requirements

Avoid overly complex calculations or models that are difficult to interpret in practice.



Earthworm casts signal active nutrient cycling — a soil service with measurable value for crop production.

STEP 6 ACTION: TURN IDEAS INTO ACTION

Reflection at the End of the Field Day

Taking a few minutes to reflect strengthens learning and improves future field days. Because regenerative agriculture is adaptive and experience-based, reflection is part of the process.

Reflection is about learning from the event, improving the next one, and closing the day calmly.

Reflection is not about reporting or compliance. It is a simple learning step for participants and organizers.

For Participants

Optional, 5–15 minutes at the end

Invite short reflection:

- What was most useful today?
- What changed your perspective?
- What will you think about differently?
- What is one action or idea you plan to apply after today's field day?

Just short structured closing.

For Organizers

10–15 minutes after the event

Ask yourselves:

1. Did we stay focused on one clear goal?
2. Did soil observation take enough time?
3. Were discussions open and honest?
4. Did participants identify next steps?
5. What would we change next time?

Write 3–5 bullet notes. That's enough.



Farmer reflection — Eko-Rege u Petra

Ending the Day With a Clear Next Step

A field day should end with a practical action, not just a positive impression. Even a small commitment helps participants move from observation to experimentation and make follow-up more meaningful.

Before closing ask:

- What will you try?
- On how much land?
- When?
- Do you have any open questions?

Why Does a Clear Next Step Matter?

Without a clear Next Step	With a clear Next Step
• People leave motivated but nothing is documented. • Good ideas fade. • Follow-up becomes unlikely.	• Intent becomes specific. • Learning is translated into action. • Conversations continue. • Change becomes more likely.

You may use the **Next Step Template** included in the ANNEXES.



Direct seeding demonstration — Jakabszállás, 2025

Follow Up Within 30 Days

A field day should not end when participants leave the farm. Follow-up helps turn interest into action and supports early experimentation.

Suggested follow-up sequence:

- **Week 1:** Share photos, presentation materials, observation results, key takeaways.
- **Week 2:** Check in with participants. Ask whether they have additional questions or are considering testing any practices discussed during the field day.
- **Week 4:** Follow up with participants who planned a next step. Discuss progress, challenges, and support needs. Where advisory services are available, confirm planned trials or visits.

Follow-up helps:

- maintain momentum
- answer new questions
- support early implementation
- strengthen trust and peer connections
- identify common barriers and learning needs
- improve future field days



Peer exchange sustains learning beyond the field day — Biofarma Dubový háj, 2025

COMMON FIELD DAY MISTAKES TO AVOID

Even well-intentioned field days can miss their impact. The following pitfalls are common and avoidable.

No clear goal

Without a specific focus, demonstrations and discussions become scattered.

What to do: Define one clear topic and desired outcome before planning anything else.

Too much talking

Long presentations reduce engagement and leave little time for observation.

What to do: Move into the field early and keep explanations short and focused.

Soil not visible

If soil is not observed directly, regenerative practices remain abstract.

What to do: Prepare at least one hands-on soil demonstration and allow participants to observe and touch.

No comparison

Without comparison, differences remain unclear and learning stays theoretical.

What to do: Show side-by-side plots, different management areas, or contrasting soil samples.

No next step

Participants may leave motivated but without a concrete plan.

What to do: Close the day by asking what each participant will try, when, and on how much land.

No follow-up

Without contact after the event, ideas fade and implementation weakens.

What to do: Reach out within 2–4 weeks to support early trials and maintain momentum.

REPEAT AND SCALE

A single field day can inspire; repeated field days support actual practice adoption and change.

Farmers rarely change management after a single event. Change becomes more likely when participants can observe progress over time, learn from peers, and test practices under their own conditions.

Repeat	Scale
- Return to the same farm to observe changes over time - Revisit the topic in different seasons - Invite participants to report what they tested - Compare progress over time, including both successes and challenges. - Build continuity rather than starting from zero each year	- Connect field days to advisory networks - Link them with regional programmes - Use them in vocational education - Encourage experienced participants to host future field days - Share practical examples, observation guides, and lessons learned

When participants see progress, hear follow-up stories, and observe long-term outcomes, change becomes more realistic and achievable. Field days become part of an ongoing learning process rather than a one-time event.

Scaling does not mean making events bigger. It means making learning easier to access, repeat, and adapt. It works best when field days become part of existing learning and advisory systems rather than stand-alone events.

Consistency, repetition, and local relevance create lasting impact.



Repeated field observation makes change visible over time

FROM FIELD DAY TO REGIONAL REGENERATIVE NETWORK

A well-designed field day can be more than an event when it becomes a starting point for collaboration.

When farmers, advisors, educators, and regional actors connect through repeated field days, informal networks begin to form. These networks strengthen the spread of practical knowledge and mutual support.

How Field Days Contribute to Networks

- Farmers connect with peers who face similar challenges.
- Demonstration farms become reference points in the region.
- Advisors identify common needs and follow-up themes.
- Regional actors align learning with strategic priorities.
- Education providers integrate real farm examples into curricula.

Over time, this creates:

- Peer-to-peer learning clusters
- Recognized demonstration farms
- Ongoing advisory collaboration
- Stronger alignment between practice, policy, and education

Field days alone do not transform regions. But when they are repeated, connected, and supported institutionally, they can contribute to a wider regenerative transition.

Small, consistent field-based learning events can become the foundation of a regional regenerative network.



Rege.food – three farmers jointly advancing regenerative farming and regional development

TOOLKIT AND ANNEXES OVERVIEW

This Guide is supported by practical tools designed for direct use in the field. The Annexes translate the six steps into concrete planning, facilitation, and follow-up materials.

All tools can be adapted to local conditions and used independently.

Annex 1 Host Preparation Checklist

Supports clear planning of focus, demonstration sites, roles, logistics, and safety.

Annex 2 Field Day Agenda Templates

Editable half-day and full-day formats to structure opening, field observation, discussion, and closing.

Annex 3 Soil Observation Guides

Five printable guides for hands-on activities: Soil Profile • Aggregate Stability • Water Infiltration • Ground Cover • Root Structure

Each guide includes purpose, materials, facilitation prompts, key questions, interpretation notes, common pitfalls, and a linked video resource.

Annex 4 Next Step Planning Template

A simple trial sheet to define what participants will test, on how much land, and when, including follow-up options.

Annex 5 Communication and Follow-Up

A time-based checklist for inviting participants, documenting the event, sharing outcomes, and following up after the field day.

Annex 6 Feedback Form Example

A simple feedback tool to capture participant reflections, identify useful learning outcomes, and support continuous improvement of future field days.

Annex 7 Field Day Documentation Sheet

The Annexes are designed to make implementation easier — helping move from intention to action.

ANNEX 1 – HOST PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to prepare the farm and event flow. Optimal preparation time is 4–12 weeks before the event. However, with a clear focus and simple setup, a field day can still be organized within 10–14 days.

4–12 Weeks Before – Define the Direction: *What is this field day really about?*

- ☐ Choose one clear topic or key question to explore
- ☐ Select a suitable date that is seasonally relevant
- ☐ Confirm host and facilitator roles, plan the flow of the day, confirm agenda
- ☐ Inform regional partners or advisors

2–4 Weeks Before – Prepare the Field: *What will participants clearly see in the field?*

- ☐ Select fields or plots that clearly illustrate the topic
- ☐ Identify comparison areas
- ☐ Decide which soil activities will be shown
- ☐ Ensure required tools are available

1–2 Weeks Before – Structure the Experience: *How will learning move toward action?*

- ☐ Prepare participant registration, attendance list, and GDPR information
- ☐ Prepare introduction (max. 10 minutes)
- ☐ Prepare 3–5 guiding discussion questions
- ☐ Print Soil Observation Guides
- ☐ Prepare Next Step templates

3–5 Days Before – Final Practical Check: *Is everything clear, safe, and ready?*

- ☐ Recheck field and weather conditions, and identify any safety risks.
- ☐ Confirm logistics to participants: parking, directions, what to wear and bring
- ☐ Assign documentation responsibility – who takes photos, notes
- ☐ Decide who keeps track of time

On the Day

- ☐ Start on time, let participants briefly introduce themselves and their expectations
- ☐ Move quickly into the field
- ☐ Keep explanations short and allow enough time for open discussion
- ☐ Allow participants to observe and touch the soil
- ☐ Close with brief participant feedback and with a clear next step

After the Field Day

- ☐ Share 3–5 photos and a short summary within a few days
- ☐ Follow up with participants who planned a next step
- ☐ Note 3 key lessons for improving the next event

ANNEX 2 – FIELD DAY AGENDA TEMPLATES

The following templates can be adapted to local conditions, season, weather, and participant needs. The sequence of activities is more important than the exact timing.

At the end of this annex, you will find **practical information to include in the invitation**, including what participants should bring, suitable clothing and footwear, possible field conditions, and the importance of arriving on time.

Field Day Overview

Before preparing the agenda, clearly define:

Title

Field Day Focus

Date and Time

Location

Host Farm:

Facilitator(s)

Target Audience

What participants will see

HALF-DAY FIELD DAY (3–4 hours)

Duration	Activity	Purpose
15 min 0:00–0:15	Welcome and introductions	Clarify the topic, objectives, and participant expectations
15 min 0:15–0:30	Farm context and field overview	Explain why this site was selected and what participants will observe
75 min 0:30–1:45	Field observations and demonstrations	Observe soil, crops, roots, water movement, equipment, or practices in action
30 min 1:45–2:15	Comparison and discussion	Compare management approaches, discuss observations and questions
30 min 2:15–2:45	Costs, risks and practical implications	Explore benefits, challenges, economics, and feasibility
15 min 2:45–3:00	Reflection and next steps	Identify possible actions, questions, and follow-up needs

FULL-DAY FIELD DAY (5–7 hours)

Duration	Activity	Purpose
20 min 0:00–0:20	Welcome and introductions	Clarify the topic, objectives, and participant expectations
20 min 0:20–0:40	Farm context and field overview	Explain local conditions, challenges, and management approach
90 min 0:40–2:10	Field observation stations	Soil observations, crop assessment, water dynamics, root observations
30 min 2:10–2:40	Break and informal discussion	Encourage farmer-to-farmer exchange
90 min 2:40–4:10	Machinery and practice demonstrations	Show practices in action and discuss practical considerations
40 min 4:10–4:50	Comparison and farmer discussion	Compare observations, management approaches and lessons learned
40 min 4:50–5:30	Costs, risks and lessons learned	Discuss benefits, trade-offs, economics, and implementation challenges
30 min 5:30–6:00	Next-step planning	Identify possible trials, support needs and follow-up actions
30 min 6:00–6:30	Final reflection and closing	Capture key takeaways and participant feedback

The agenda can be shortened to approximately five hours by reducing the number of observation stations or demonstrations. It can be extended to seven hours by including an additional field site, demonstration or peer-exchange session.

Practical Information to include on the invitation

Please bring:

- ✓ Suitable field footwear (boots or sturdy shoes)
- ✓ Clothing appropriate for weather conditions, including a warm layer or jacket, as field demonstrations often involve standing outdoors for extended periods
- ✓ Sun and rain protection where appropriate (hat, sunscreen, waterproof clothing)
- ✓ Water and any personal requirements

Please arrive on time. Early field observations and demonstrations are often difficult to repeat later in the programme.

Field conditions may be uneven, muddy, wet, windy, hot, or cold depending on the season and weather.

ANNEX 3 – SOIL OBSERVATION GUIDES

The table below provides an overview of five soil observation activities. Demonstration videos for each activity are available on the REGE-FARMS platform at rege-farms.eu.

 Soil Profile Exploration	01	PURPOSE Observe layers, roots, compaction, moisture, and soil life.	MATERIALS Spade or auger, knife, tape, tray, observation sheet.
		STEPS Open a pit or probe; observe layers and compare two sites.	QUESTIONS Where do roots stop? What signs of soil life do you see?
		INTERPRETATION Good structure and roots support infiltration and resilience.	COMMON PITFALLS Avoid long lectures; keep the focus on observation and questions.
 Aggregate Stability	02	PURPOSE Show whether aggregates remain stable in water.	MATERIALS Soil samples, jars, water, spoon or sieve, labels.
		STEPS Place aggregates in water; watch if they remain intact or break down.	QUESTIONS Which sample holds together? Why?
		INTERPRETATION Stable aggregates suggest good organic matter and lower erosion risk.	COMMON PITFALLS Do not shake jars or over-interpret one sample.
 Water Infiltration Test	03	PURPOSE Show how fast water enters soil and relate it to runoff and drought.	MATERIALS Ring, water jug, stopwatch, ruler, observation sheet.
		STEPS Insert the ring, add water, and time infiltration; repeat at a second site.	QUESTIONS How fast does water enter? What happens in heavy rain?
		INTERPRETATION Faster infiltration stores more rainfall and reduces runoff.	COMMON PITFALLS Do not compare very different slopes or moisture conditions.
 Ground Cover & Residue	04	PURPOSE Assess how plants, mulch, and residues protect soil.	MATERIALS Frame, observation sheet, camera, optional cover chart.
		STEPS Estimate living cover, residue, mulch, and bare soil; compare areas.	QUESTIONS How much soil is covered? Where is bare soil?
		INTERPRETATION Covered soil stays cooler, loses less moisture, and dries less rapidly.	COMMON PITFALLS Do not judge cover too quickly or without seasonal context.
 Root Structure	05	PURPOSE Examine root depth, density, and branching.	MATERIALS Spade or auger, knife, tape, water, tray, observation sheet.
		STEPS Dig up a plant, expose roots, and observe depth, branching, and barriers.	QUESTIONS How deep do roots grow? Are they dense or restricted?
		INTERPRETATION Deep, branched roots improve access to water and nutrients.	COMMON PITFALLS Avoid damaging roots or assessing them only by length.

ANNEX 4 – NEXT STEP PLANNING TEMPLATE

Present this sheet as: “Before you leave, take 3 minutes to write down what you will try. This is for you.” Do NOT present it as: “Please fill out this form.” This small shift turns the template from a reporting tool into a planning tool.

Field Day Next Step Sheet

Name (optional):

Farm / Organization:

What practice are you considering testing?

- ☐ Cover crop mix
- ☐ Reduced tillage
- ☐ Compost application
- ☐ Soil monitoring
- ☐ Other:

Where will you test it? On how much area?

When do you plan to start?

- ☐ This season
- ☐ Next season
- ☐ Still evaluating

Would you like follow-up support?

- ☐ Yes – advisory visit
- ☐ Yes – peer exchange group
- ☐ No, independent trial

Any questions or support needs?

ANNEX 5 – COMMUNICATION AND FOLLOW-UP

A field day should not end when people drive home.

Sharing what was seen and tested helps others learn and keeps the conversation going.

This does not require professional marketing. Just clarity and honesty – before, during, and after the event.

When	Action	What to Do
4 – 8 weeks before	Be clear when inviting participants	• State the exact topic and focus • Explain what people will see in the field • Clarify who the event is relevant for
3 – 5 days before	Send a reminder with logistics	• Confirm time and location • Share clear directions (map/GPS) • Mention what to bring (boots, warm clothes, etc.)
During the event	Document what you really see	• Take simple photos of soil pits and comparison plots • Capture field conditions as they are • Note key observations and farmer comments
In all communication	Communicate honestly	• Share what worked • Mention challenges and uncertainties • Avoid overpromising results
Within 2 – 3 days after	Post and share shortly after the event	• Share 3–5 photos with a short summary • Mention key insights and next steps • Share presentations, photos, videos, and observation guides on the REGE-FARMS platform • Inform people how they can join future events
2 – 4 weeks after	Follow up with participants	• Contact participants who planned a next step • Ask what they tested and what happened • Share short updates within your network
Ongoing	Keep the conversation alive	• Use farmer groups and advisory meetings • Share simple social media posts • Invite interested people to the next field day

The goal is shared learning and continued exchange. The goal is not promotion.

ANNEX 6 – FEEDBACK FORM

Field Day Title: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Thank you for participating. Your feedback helps improve future field days.

1. How would you rate your knowledge of the topic before this event?

☐ Basic awareness ☐ Good knowledge ☐ Expert

2. Please rate the following aspects of the field day

Aspect	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Venue / meeting facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Refreshments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Facilitation and moderation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presentations and explanations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Field demonstrations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunities for discussion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How useful was today's field day for you?

☐ Not useful ☐ Slightly useful ☐ Moderately useful ☐ Very useful ☐ Extremely useful

4. What was the most useful learning point, practice or idea you gained today?

5. What could be improved in future field days?

6. Would you like to receive information about future events or follow-up support?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name (optional):

Email / Phone (optional):

☐ I consent to being contacted about future REGE-FARMS events and follow-up support. My contact details will be processed in accordance with the privacy information provided by the event organizer.

ANNEX 7 – FIELD DAY DOCUMENTATION SHEET

Field Day Title	
Topic	
Date	
Location	
Host Farm / Organization	
Facilitator(s)	
Participation	Number of participants registered: Number of participants attending: Number of organizations represented: ☐ Farmers ☐ Advisors ☐ Researchers ☐ Students ☐ NGOs ☐ Public authorities ☐ Other:
Activities and content	☐ Welcome and intro ☐ Presentation/s ☐ Field demos ☐ Soil observation ☐ Discussion ☐ Peer exchange ☐ Action planning ☐ Other:
Demonstration Topics Covered	
Key Questions Raised by Participants	
Key Lessons Learnt	
Follow-Up Actions Identified	☐ Advisory support requested ☐ Follow-up visit planned ☐ Farmer trial planned ☐ Peer exchange group formed ☐ Further training requested ☐ Other:
Documentation Collected	☐ Attendance list ☐ Photographs ☐ Presentation materials ☐ Feedback forms ☐ Field observations ☐ Other:
Facilitator Reflection	
What worked particularly well?	
What should be improved next time?	

Date and place:

Prepared by:

REGE-FARMS PARTNERS IN PRACTICE



Živá Záhrada, Slovakia

A social enterprise based in **Leopoldov** supporting **soil regeneration** through biological assessment, composting, advisory services, education and applied research. It works with farmers, municipalities and organizations while creating opportunities for disadvantaged citizens. www.zivazahrada.sk



Carboneg Institute, Czechia

An **innovation-driven** organization helping farmers adopt regenerative agriculture through practical guidance, research, carbon farming programmes, field demonstrations and training, with a focus on healthier soils, biodiversity and resilient farming systems. www.carboneg.com



Regenerative Farmers Association of Hungary

A **farmer-led network** advancing regenerative agriculture through peer learning, practical experience and knowledge exchange. It connects farmers, advisors and researchers to demonstrate effective practices and strengthen soil health across the **Carpathian Basin**. www.tmg.hu



GAL Meridaunia, Italy

A **Local Action Group** and regional development agency connecting farmers, municipalities, businesses and communities across **Monti Dauni**. It supports rural innovation, local food, short supply chains, tourism and European cooperation. www.meridaunia.it



Biopikilo, Greece

An **innovation company** supporting regenerative agriculture and resilient food systems through natural-capital expertise, research, finance and nature-based solutions. It helps farmers and rural communities develop projects, enhance biodiversity and access **financing**. www.biopikilo.com

CONTINUE LEARNING WITH REGE-FARMS

Visit www.rege-farms.eu to explore:

- ✓ Case studies
- ✓ Infographics
- ✓ Soil observation guides
- ✓ Learning resources
- ✓ Past & upcoming field days



Healthy soils. Resilient farms.
Strong communities



REGE-FARMS



Co-funded by
the European Union