

**FINDINGS OF THE**  
**REGINA**  
**TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH**

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Demetris Mylonas



## The research included:

- Desk study on the basic characteristics of the agricultural sector in each country and current levels of RA uptake
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Online farmers' survey to map the uptake of RA and identify the farmers' needs in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Documentation of RA case studies in each country as examples of farms making the transition to RA

National Reports and a Synthesis Report

## Differences and similarities in the national contexts of the partner countries

- **Agricultural land:** Distribution between permanent crops, grassland, arable land.
- **Crop output** Greece → Italy → Hungary → Slovenia → Ireland **Animal output**
- **Size of holdings (land and economic):** Very small in Hungary and Greece, moderate in Italy and Slovenia, greater size in Ireland
- **Age of farm holders:** Ageing population of farm holders in all countries (in Italy 41% are above 64 years old)
- Steady **reduction of employment** in the agricultural sector



- Findings from **Stakeholder interviews**

6 stakeholder interviews per partner country (Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Ireland, Greece)  
30 interviews in total

Stakeholder organisations: Farmers associations, networks, educational institutions, NGOs, central government bodies, regional and local authorities, agricultural consortia etc.

Knowledge of  
the term  
**Regenerative  
Agriculture**

- The term is not yet widespread
- Limited knowledge of the meaning, objectives and how to make the transition from conventional farming
- Too many terms used to describe different or overlapping approaches to sustainable farming can create confusion (integrated management, permaculture, agroforestry, biodynamic farming, agroecology, etc.)

## Current uptake of **Regenerative Agriculture**

- Limited uptake in all partner countries
- Usually attempted by environmentally conscious farmers disillusioned by the organic farming movement

## Obstacles to a widespread transition to Regenerative Agriculture

- Prevailing mentality of farmers who put the emphasis on increasing their production on the short term rather than reducing production costs in the long term
- Ageing population of farmers
- Significant gaps in training and knowledge/knowhow by experts with advisory role (e.g. agronomists) and farmers. The **change of mindset** is key: instead of relying on chemical inputs (passive mindset), farmers will have to adopt a culture of initiative and use alternative methods through knowledge, experimentation and monitoring (active mindset).
- Lack of incentives for farmers
- Social issues
- Costs of purchasing new machinery/organic fertilisers
- Uncertainty for production levels and great reduction of yields (Hungarian stakeholders)

## Benefits of Regenerative Agriculture

- **Economic benefits for farmers:** Although the transition to RA requires 4-5 years, farms become more productive with lower production costs = increased income. Increasing international demand for RA products (cotton, hemp)
- **Environmental benefits:** Reversing the impact of agriculture on the environment from negative to positive (enhancing biodiversity, sequestering greater amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>) and ensuring the soil keeps producing for the future generations
- **Social benefits:** Enhancing the farmers' role and social profile as guardians of biodiversity, attracting younger population in rural areas through a sustainable income
- **Health-wellbeing:** The uncontrolled use of chemical pesticides/herbicides in the past was strongly connected to health problems. Farmers employing RA report reduced stress levels and improved wellbeing from working in a natural environment rich in biodiversity



## Prerequisites for a wider spread of Regenerative Agriculture

- **Education and training:** Key to respond to farmers' questions and doubts about RA. Education of agronomists/consultants is necessary to support farmers in the transition. Farmers' training not limited to conventional training methods, but including farm visits and experience sharing.
- **Support in terms of funding and policies:** Subsidies must be linked to measurable indicators regarding biodiversity and soil regeneration. Policy framework should cultivate a mentality of initiative among farmers.
- **Marketing and selling RA products:** Follow the joint marketing practice employed in organic farming, creating rural RA districts

- Findings from **online farmers survey**

553 farmers participated in total



Do you follow conventional farming methods, alternative or both?

- Most respondents in Hungary, Ireland and Italy follow conventional farming methods
- Even distribution in Slovenia
- Mainly alternative farming methods in Greece

## Awareness of alternative farming methods

- More familiar with organic farming, conservation agriculture and sustainable farm management. Not so familiar with the term “Regenerative Agriculture”.
- Farmers are divided on whether conventional farming is sustainable, and whether only conventional farming can produce enough food.
- Farmers in all countries agree there is not enough support (training, financial support) to introduce alternative farming methods

## Awareness on Regenerative Agriculture

- Most respondents report they are familiar with different techniques of RA
- Benefits like the reduction of labour, less farm mechanisation, increased farm revenue and less problems with plant diseases are generally **not recognised**.
- Main **obstacles**: lack of financial support, financial uncertainty regarding the short-term future and lack of know-how.

## Attitudes on taking up Regenerative Agriculture

- Most respondents reported they are either implementing RA practices now or are planning to do so in the future.
- Vast majority stated they would like to receive information and training on **regenerative agriculture farming practices (techniques)**, **economic benefits** of RA practices, **environmental benefits** of RA practices, **obstacles/difficulties** of RA and **financial support possibilities** for regenerative farming practices.
- Respondents from Hungary, Slovenia and Ireland would prefer **information**. Respondents from Greece and Italy would prefer **training**.

What factors  
would enhance the  
uptake of RA in  
your farm?

- More financial support from government or EU
- More opportunities for training and technical support (e.g. by agronomists)
- Good practice sharing among farmers, networking
- Knowledge: lectures, workshops, demonstrations, instructions

## Key factors for education-training on Regenerative Agriculture

- Need to **educate experts/consultants** on RA, to guide farmers on the transition taking into account their **specific context** (climate conditions, production type, farm structure, etc.).
- Need to **train farmers**, in order to:
  - Dissolve misconceptions and doubts, provide credible evidence
  - Build a positive mentality – initiative → learn, experiment, monitor
  - Collect empirical knowledge and organise as learning content
- Employ alternative training methods: Field schools, educational visits, sharing experience, learning by doing
- Create and maintain RA networks in each country to encourage sharing successes and failures, and enhance the marketing of RA production



## Library of **Regenerative Agriculture** success stories

- 30 case studies in total (6 in each country)
- Each case study documentation includes:
  - Summary of the success story
  - General information: Location, size of farm, staff, main products
  - RA practices employed
  - Motivation behind implementing RA
  - Benefits, obstacles and solutions
  - Overall attitude towards RA
- Accessible at the REGINA website, through an online library searchable by country, products or RA practice implemented.



**THANK YOU**

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