

We work across borders in the project
Regenerative nature tourism - REGGAE

**TOURISM THAT
STRENGTHENS LOCAL
CULTURE, COMMUNITY
AND ENVIRONMENT**

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Reggae Newsletter 4/2025

Check also: [REGGAE homepage](#)¹

¹<https://www.slu.se/en/departments/forest-ecology-management/forskning/nordic-nature-health-hub/regenerative-nature-tourism/>

Greetings from the project!



REGENERATIVE NATURE TOURISM

HAPPY PLACES - HAPPY FACES

The REGGAE project continues to strengthen cross-border collaboration and expand knowledge on regenerative and transformative tourism. Over the past months, partners in Finland and Sweden have worked closely together to offer entrepreneurs new learning opportunities, pilot innovative service concepts, and deepen understanding of sustainability in nature-based tourism.

A central focus has been developing the skills and capacities needed for tourism that not only minimises harm - but actively improves the health of ecosystems, communities, and visitors. Through excursions, online courses, workshops, and case studies, entrepreneurs have explored how cultural heritage, biodiversity, accessibility, and mindful customer experiences can become core elements of regenerative tourism services.

In this newsletter, we share updates on recent activities, including our latest courses, findings on accessibility, company highlights, and insights from the October workshop on cultural heritage and conservation. We hope these stories inspire continued learning and support your journey toward more regenerative tourism practices.

Pia Smeds

Project Coordinator

(banner photo: Backfors Gård)

Project updates



Excursions and courses

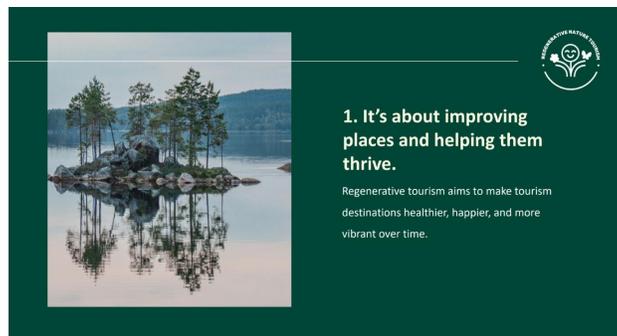
Excursions

During the summer, we carried out two excursions: one on ecology and nature conservation, and another on how to maintain the traditional cultural landscape. The first excursion focused on increasing a nature-based entrepreneur's knowledge of species in different biotopes and on ways to contribute to biodiversity. The second taught participants how to maintain open landscapes through mowing, scything, and clearing, including information on how species composition and biodiversity change.

Regenerative Nature Tourism

We have also conducted two online courses. The first, held in September, was titled Regenerative Nature Tourism. The course focused on defining regenerative and transformative tourism. We showcased businesses that have successfully adopted regenerative practices, and they shared insights into their work. The course also covered sustainable entrepreneurship, nature and cultural conservation as part of business operations, citizen science, basic knowledge of forest management and forest ownership, nature and health, and finally, sustainable cooking. The course is still open, and you can sign up to access lectures, links, and literature.

Reggae Course 1²



Marketing and Communication

The second course launched in November, and we hosted a seminar at the end of the month. This course focused on Marketing and Communication, exploring how to design, package, and promote regenerative tourism products, covering everything from understanding cost structures to creating engaging storytelling. We offered practical tools and inspiration for effectively communicating your vision across various media channels. Like the first course, it is still open for registration.

Reggae Course 2³

²<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcanvascourses.slu.se%2Fbrowse%2Fslu-sv%2Fnnhh%2Freggae%2Fcourses%2Freggae-rt&data=05|02|lena.enlund%40centria.fi|99b640b25c7a4d3b856208de3bc4d61e|acc6158d174ca5bfc5c8d799c2dc2e|0|0|639013913769300068|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUslYiOilwLjAuMDAwMClslAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbCislldUljoyfQ%3D%3D|0||&sdata=T7t90BgAYZY1QZtyNvtJhG%2BPixPpXd4mQhBL9lqXGk%3D&reserved=0>

³<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcanvascourses.slu.se%2Fbrowse%2Fslu-sv%2Fnnhh%2Freggae%2Fcourses%2Freggae-mc&data=05|02|lena.enlund%40centria.fi|99b640b25c7a4d3b856208de3bc4d61e|acc6158d174ca5bfc5c8d799c2dc2e|0|0|639013913769988275|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUslYiOilwLjAuMDAw>

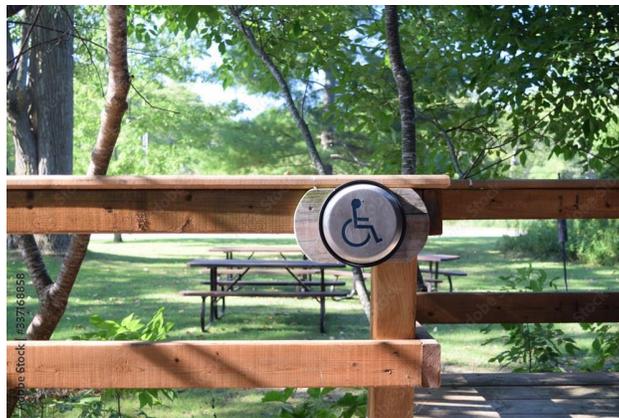
course will also cover cultural heritage - what exists and ways to preserve and restore both biological heritage and historical buildings.

Reggae Course 3⁴

Accessible and Inclusive Tourism upcoming in April!

In April 2026, the course theme will be Accessible and Inclusive Tourism. This course emphasizes how you, as a nature-based entrepreneur, can make natural environments accessible to groups that usually face barriers in reaching them. The goal is for destinations, products, and services to be accessible to everyone, regardless of physical or cognitive limitations, disabilities, or age.

Reggae Course 4⁵



Raising awareness and visibility

New research findings from our project examine why accessibility is essential for the future of nature-based tourism. Results are based on nine interviews with tourism companies, accessibility consultants, and disability organizations, along with a case study from a cow camp in Ilomantsi, Eastern Finland. The findings demonstrate that making nature accessible to more people is not only a matter of social justice but also a major opportunity for tourism

⁴<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcanvascourses.slu.se%2Fbrowse%2Fslu-sv%2Fnnhh%2Freggae%2Fcourses%2Freggae-chfh&data=05|02|lena.enlund%40centria.fi|99b640b25c7a4d3b856208de3bc4d61e|acc6158d174ca5bfc5c8d799c2dc2e|0|0|639013913770015810|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUslYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslAIiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D|0||&sdata=SlCgNZ8%2BR%2BQL3ippfyoCyJ6h5Gmzb%2BaAqSIBUBMp3PM%3D&reserved=0>

⁵<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcanvascourses.slu.se%2Fbrowse%2Fslu-sv%2Fnnhh%2Freggae%2Fcourses%2Freggae-ait&data=05|02|lena.enlund%40centria.fi|99b640b25c7a4d3b856208de3bc4d61e|acc6158d174ca5bfc5c8d799c2dc2e|0|0|639013913770035909|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUslYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslAIiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D|0||&sdata=9tMMM4f6Gnh70cO6xMhSj6SAeJqc6NblaR0eBzQN36s%3D&reserved=0>

development. Although spending time outdoors provides health and well-being benefits, many visitors with disabilities still face barriers that prevent their participation.

The interview findings point out three common types of obstacles: physical barriers like uneven paths or inaccessible facilities; attitudinal barriers rooted in misconceptions about what people with disabilities can or want to do; and information barriers in which crucial details about terrain, distances, surfaces, or available services are missing. Moreover, companies often misunderstand accessibility as a costly niche issue. In reality, many of the most effective improvements are small, low-cost adjustments: clearer online information, a handrail or resting bench, better signage, or simple measures to level uneven surfaces. Such steps help a wide range of visitors, including families with young children and older people. A central insight from our research is that accessibility is closely linked to regenerative tourism. Inclusive design strengthens social sustainability, increases participation, and nurtures stronger connections between visitors and landscapes. Overall, the findings show that offering accessible, nature-based tourism experiences is both an ethical commitment and a strategic advantage. Businesses that invest in accessibility often attract more visitors, improve their reputation, and build long-term relationships with user groups.



Case study: Cow camp



In mid-June, the REGGAE project conducted a case study at a one-night cow camp hosted by the project company in Iломantsi, Eastern Finland. The program provided guests with an authentic taste of traditional farm life: hand milking, feeding lambs and calves, and caring for other animals. The customers were eight women from a regional hearing association, making accessibility a key theme of the experience.

The participants stated that taking part in the case study was an extremely positive experience. Since the company personnel spoke clearly and audibly, group sizes were small, and unnecessary background noise was eliminated, they did not encounter any hearing issues. The participants also reported that the experience made them realize that small-scale farming and, simultaneously, a sustainable lifestyle close to nature are still achievable.

Since the participants were seniors, the traditional activities triggered nostalgic memories of their childhood. They also pointed out the importance of caring for natural biodiversity, as animals served as landscape managers in endangered traditional rural habitats. For them, it also reflected respect for animals, as they were able to have this kind of retirement career after they,

for example, had stopped producing milk. This illustrates how the regenerative elements included in the service can hold different meanings for different customers.

Photos: Imatran kuulo ry



Project companies -

Meet a few of the

several reference companies taking part in the project!

Company presentation - Bötombergen



Bötombergen

Bötombergen/Pyhävuori is an outdoor recreation area about 15 km northeast of Kristinestad, known for its marked hiking trails and a small alpine ski centre. A place where you can feel good

– both physically and mentally. Each year, approximately 30,000 people visit this unique nature area. In 2025, Bötombergen was also granted UNESCO Geopark status, demonstrating the presence of a unique natural environment that we must protect.

Bötombergen features three ski slopes, two lifts, 30 kilometers of ski and hiking trails, numerous barbecue areas, an outdoor gym, exercise stairs, a campsite, a sauna, a restaurant, a swimming beach, caravan parking, bicycle rentals, and a disc golf course.



In 2026, Bötombergen will also buy two all-terrain wheelchairs so people with mobility challenges can enjoy our unique natural surroundings. This is made possible by a donation from Lokaltapiola. Bötombergen received the Environmental Grant of the Year in Ostrobothnia in 2025.

As operations manager Janne Smeds says “at Bötombergen, we aim to offer something for everyone, regardless of gender, background, age, or physical ability. We are very proud to offer such a wide variety of outdoor activities.” He explains what regeneration means for them, “for us, it's crucial to protect and even enhance the unique nature of the area. That’s why we focus not only on sustainability but also on regenerative tourism.”

Regeneration comes to life at Bötombergen as visitors actively participate in maintaining the area. Caravan guests assist with painting, clearing brush, and chopping firewood, while others help with ski trail and path maintenance. Also, the local community is essential. Nearly 80 local groups and associations organize events here, making Bötombergen a lively hub for activities. Nearly 20 local young people work at the center each year, making it the city’s biggest youth employer. Together with visitors, volunteers, and the community, Bötombergen is not only maintained but also improved, ensuring it remains a place of health, activity, and joy for future generations.

Check more at: www.botombergen.fi⁶

Photos: Janne Smeds



⁶<http://www.botombergen.fi/>



Company presentation - Stormhaga





Stormhaga visitor farm

Surrounded by fields but just a stone's throw from the nearest village in Kronoby, Ostrobothnia, is Stormhaga Visitor Farm. It all started small, with just a couple of dwarf goats, chickens, and rabbits, and today, four years later, there are 10 dwarf goats, chickens, quails, 15 rabbits, and five alpacas. The alpacas' wool is sheared once a year with help from village volunteers, and the wool is used. The latest addition to the farm is six angora rabbits, to sell yarn in the future.

The farm is regularly visited by booked groups from preschools, schools, and various accommodations, and we have a close collaboration with the local 4-H association, which arranges day camps for children and young people on the farm a few times a year. The peak season at the farm is still summer when the animals thrive outside, and new litters are born, but the goal is to stay open for visits at least 1-2 weekends per month, year-round, and during school holidays.

Admission always includes coffee or juice and biscuits. Inside the old barn, a café has been set up where you can also book private events and parties, ranging from children's parties to bachelorette gatherings. The café area is decorated with vintage furniture, old utility items, and ornaments, and has been highly appreciated, especially by older visitors who recognize the items from the past. They have called it an authentic cultural experience.

As the owner, Maria Raitanen explains: “the animals on the farm inspire a calm that "rubs off" on visitors, something that huge groups of children and young people who feel mentally ill have been able to observe. What visitors appreciate most on the farm is the proximity to the animals, that they get to feed and pet them and get close to them in a way that is not so common today.” Many are now returning visitors.

Check more at <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=stormhaga%20g%C3%A5rd>⁷

Photos: Maria Raitanen



⁷<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=stormhaga gård>



Company presentation- Fischars Farm



At Fischars Farm in Sideby, Ostrobothnia, farm life, sauna traditions, and regenerative thinking come together. The farm works closely with local artisans and supports biodiversity through grazing and annual mowing, while building a resilient rural economy rooted in long-term brand

development and farmer wellbeing. Ethical sheep farming that values both nature and the economy is at the core of the farm's efforts, along with preserving local cultural heritage such as Ostrobothnian farm traditions, sauna culture, and storytelling as part of regenerative tourism.

Community and micro-economy play an important role. The owner, Suvi Westerback, emphasizes collaboration with local makers and the importance of biodiversity-friendly land use. Recently, farmer's well-being has also become a key focus, acknowledging that sustainable farms depend on healthy farmers.

In summer 2025, Fischars Farm introduced a Shepherd's Holiday, providing visitors with a hands-on experience of rural living and landscape conservation. As Suvi mentions, sheep have a remarkable ability to care for landscapes in ways that humans simply cannot replicate.

Fischars Farm is a small rural business making a meaningful sustainability impact.

Check more at: <https://www.facebook.com/fischarsfarm/>

Photos: Outi Neuvonen and Suvi Westerback



Reggae workshop in October





Workshop on cultural heritage and conservation

The REGGAE project's fourth workshop was held in October, in Umeå, hosted by SLU. The event gathered seven nature tourism businesses to explore how to develop more regenerative elements of cultural heritage, and conservation into their tourism services and products. Presentations highlighted that regenerative tourism focuses on creating net-positive impacts supporting local communities, ecosystems, and cultural traditions.

Companies shared insights from their development processes, including case studies on traditional agriculture, nature-based experiences, and the importance of reflection as part of the customer journey. The workshop emphasized that regenerative tourism is not about creating entirely new products but about embedding elements that actively benefit local communities, ecosystems, and cultures. Key themes included storytelling, reflection with customers, strengthening cultural identity, and fostering well-being.

Entrepreneurs shared examples such as farm-based experiences, heritage storytelling, and nature-centered activities that strengthen local culture and biodiversity. The reference companies, among which here above presented Bötombergen and Fischars Farm, discussed their ongoing shifts toward regenerative practices. The workshop also included an exhibition of

traditional crafts, and a study visit to a boatbuilder using historical methods. During the last day, the companies continued showcasing their steps toward more regenerative offerings, ranging from biosphere-engaged cultural centers to historic bed & breakfasts and horse-based nature experiences. A highlight was the announcement that Horses of Taiga has been nominated for the Grand Travel Award Ecotourism 2026.

Read more at: Workshop 4⁸

Photos: Amanda Lund and Lena Enlund



⁸<https://www.slu.se/en/about-slu/organisation/departments/forest-ecology-management/research/themes/skog-och-halsa/nordic-nature-health-hub/reggae--regenerative-nature-tourism/projektaktiviteter/workshop-umea/>



Events, ideas, research, and good practices



Fallängtorp farm

In August, we from Mid Sweden University visited Fallängengetorp, a family-run farm and guesthouse, to learn from a concrete and inspiring example of how nature-based tourism businesses can work with accessibility in practice. During the day, we saw how they worked in very practical ways to open the farm to a wider range of visitors. Among other things, we observed how spacious, step-free indoor environments, flexible furnishing solutions, accessible

bathrooms, and a kitchen with height-adjustable work surfaces make it possible for guests with different needs to share the same experience on equal terms.

Outdoors, we experienced how well-considered but well-planned measures can make a big difference: smoother paths and improved surfaces, fixed and portable ramps, a wagon with space for wheelchairs, and aids such as all-terrain electric wheelchairs. Together, these measures make it possible for more people to take part in the forest, animals, and farm life, not just as spectators but as active participants. The visit clearly showed that accessibility isn't about "special solutions," but about making the experience appealing to more guests and supporting the company's long-term growth.

The experiences from Fallängetorp will be integrated into our ongoing project efforts and highlighted as a good example in our upcoming guidebook on regenerative nature tourism. There, you will be able to read more about the visit, access practical tips, and deeper stories directly from the farm when the guidebook is published in the spring.

Photos: Amanda Lund

Seminars and Workshops



THE DATE FOR THE LAST REGGAE WORKSHOP WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN EARLY 2026.

Soon to come more information on the REGGAE social media!

The project - Regenerative Nature Tourism

The project - Regenerative Nature Tourism

Aims to promote accessible and regenerative tourism and to enhance the well-being of entrepreneurs in the project area by building networks and clusters, developing courses, guidebook, and novel thematic tourism experiences. By the increased competence of entrepreneurs and developing thematic tourism experiences co-created together with customers, researchers, local community, and entrepreneurs, tourism firms can attract new customers. Finally, the competitiveness of the tourism firms is enhanced while bringing wider benefits to the travel destination. Cross-border products through cross-branch networks and clusters support the understanding of valuable joint culture and rich history as well as how our prosperous but vulnerable nature is as a resource for all. Thus, the acceptability of sustainable

tourism services increases, and tourists take home lessons on how to give back to nature. Regenerative tourism will increase well-being and prosperity for nature, society, culture and a more stable income for entrepreneurs. The project started 09/2023 and ends 08/2026.

Project details and contacts

Social Media Channels of the Project

LinkedIn⁹ Facebook¹⁰



Contact details for the Project Working Group can be found on the project website¹¹

Project Administration Personnel at Luke

Pia Smeds

Project manager

pia.smeds@luke.fi

+358 40 1795309

Lena Enlund

Research & Development, Communication

lena.enlund@centria.fi

+358 44 7250594

⁹<https://www.linkedin.com/company/reggae/?viewAsMember=true>

¹⁰<https://www.facebook.com/regenerativenaturetourism/>

¹¹<https://www.slu.se/en/departments/forest-ecology-management/forskning/nordic-nature-health-hub/regenerative-nature-tourism/>

The project Regenerative Nature Tourism, is also called Reggae. The project is funded by Interreg Aurora, with co-financing by:



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