METHODOLOGY M 9	FIELD VISIT
	Preparation of session

Date (26/03/2010)

WHAT IS?	Field visits are a type of training where farmers and advisers can see new technical solutions and are valuable not only for the fact participants can learn about how to implement new solutions, but also through the discussions which can held during the visit. Demonstration trials and results can be ideal for launching these discussions, as can farmers' own experimental plots. In the latter case farmers set up a research field and employ different management options (farmers' practice versus new technology recommended by the adviser). Therefore, you need special methodologies to facilitate the sharing of experience between participants during field visits. The effectiveness of field visits can be increased if several visits are conducted during the season. The ideal is once or twice a month during the growing season.
WHY	Field visits are a special event where many people (farmers, advisers, consultants and other stakeholders) are present. This is the moment to pass on new messages and to begin a discussion with stakeholders or end-users about the advantages and how to overcome problems when employing new management options. With regular field visits, farmers have opportunity to follow the development of the plants, pests and diseases, and in general the effect of the tested management options.
HOW	We suggest a two-step process: ► First, participants have to search for information during the field visit on posters, demonstration plots, a farmer's field etc. ► Second, you ask participants to share their information and their own experiences or questions about technical solutions. To encourage participants to search for information, you can use different approaches : 1. Introduction: explain the cultivation/growing/pest/disease problem. 2. Field visit: to encourage participants to find/propose a solution, different approaches exist and we suggest the following (see Methodology sheets) : ► **Info hunt:** participants search for information individually during the visit using a written questionnaire. At some point, participants exchange information.

	► **Before and after:** participants write their opinion about some technical solutions before the visit or after the introduction. During the visit, they can change their opinion or hold on to their original opinion. ► **Highlight hierarchy**: every participant writes key points they think the most important, looking after different information given during the visit. At a convenient point, you can review participants' key points and compile a list of the group's top five to 10. ► **Agro-Ecosystem Analyses**: field observations on the agro-ecosystem (biotic factors such as plants, weeds, pests and diseases, and abiotic factors such as soil and weather, etc.) The goal of Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESA) is to assess what type of action will be needed to best produce a profit for the farmer. 3. Explanation: the theory behind the new approach, the rationale and leverages for change and problems which needed to be overcome. 4. An indoor concluding session, evaluating the pros and cons of the new strategy or adaptations.
WHAT I NEED TO?	Prepare posters or documents giving information about technical solutions and how to implement them so participants can see and read information. ► Prepare questionnaires, using one or more of the three methodologies (see methodology sheets) ► Arrange discussion points during the visit. These discussions should not be one-way, but the point at which participants can share their experiences.
SOURCES	John Rodwell : Activity-based training design (Gower, UK, 2007) ENDURE: Training in Integrated Pest Management No.3