

## VISITOR CENTRE METEORIA SÖDERFJÄRDEN – A GREEN FORERUNNER

The Meteorica participates in Sustainable Travel Finland STF is an active, climate-smart tourist actor. Since the centre's start in 2008, sustainable development has been an overall goal of the Meteorica – the centre has consistently run a sustainable business for 15 years and in 2011 we received the Nordic Environment Award, *The Nordic Green Belt*.

The Meteorica is a green forerunner for sustainable development at a smaller visitor point.

The centre's sustainable profile is continuously updated in collaboration with Meteorica guides, Sundom village association activists and visitors. The update is based on a separate development plan and on the UN's global goals for sustainable development.

Meteorica actively participates in Visit Finland's process for responsible tourism and supports the global goals for sustainable development, therefore our guides carry Agenda 2030 pins.

### Ecological sustainability

From the start, environmental sustainability has been an overall guiding light for the centre. Renewable energy production – Off Grid - with solar panels, a wind turbine and batteries for energy storage that provides a secure electricity supply for 9-10 months of the year. With backup of a biodiesel-powered generator and temperature controls, occasional events have been possible even during the darkest and coldest months of the year in the warm exhibition section. In recent years, an addition of heat has been obtained from a biomeiler, i.e. a large compost of fresh wood chips and horse manure.

Low-energy lamps and energy-saving control of installations are used throughout.

The Meteorica's vivid energy production is also presented in our viewing program. The facility can thus be a model for small-scale building of green energy. Over the years, visiting school groups and students in particular have received easy-to-understand lessons in sustainable energy generation and energy saving.

### Social and cultural sustainability

In the Meteorica's activities, social and cultural sustainability is a given starting point. In all activities, we promote the UN's global sustainability goals for human rights, equal value for all, equality and social justice.

We meet visitors with kindness and respect. Our guides and site hosts communicate in the language the guests choose: Finnish, Swedish or English and sometimes other languages or Ostrobothnian dialects. Our aim is to have an equal dialogue with the visitors. In the conversation, enriching aspects are often born, as visitors contribute with their insights and experiences.

As volunteering is an essential part of Meteorica's management and development, association meetings and voluntary work mean togetherness and enriching social gatherings for many participants. Trust and social competence are strengthened in the local community, when decisions are made jointly and when the joint effort gives visible results.

Continuous information to and exchange of ideas with the residents in the immediate area about the activities and about the center's future plans is important.

### Economic sustainability

Environmental improvement measures are implemented all the time according to available resources.

Sustainable development is a part of the Meteorica's marketing – the centre's clear environmental profile is emphasized to visitors - from school groups to seniors.

In all purchasing, goods and services are tested on the basis of sustainability criteria.