



Sweden

In Sweden, education is seen as pivotal to achieving the national goal of ecological sustainability. Sweden has been part of the Baltic 21 process to develop the Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea region. Education is recognized as an important way of implementing strategies within Baltic 21. The Ministry of the Environment developed a National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002. This targets lifelong learning skills and knowledge as a means of contributing to sustainable development in Sweden. The report recognises the school system as being pivotal in supporting the sustainable development agenda. Goals established here are aligned with goals established as part of the Green School Award.

Projects/Initiatives

In 1998, the **Green School Award** was initiated by the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) in collaboration with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The Award was set up to strengthen environmental education in the formal curriculum as a means of achieving Sweden's goal of ecological sustainability. The National Agency for Education is the central administrative authority for the Swedish public school system and, as a consequence, the programme and its underpinning award criteria are closely aligned with the goals of the Swedish Education Act (1985). Therefore, ESD is fully integrated into the Swedish school system and implemented through the curriculum and syllabi. In 2004, the Green School Award criteria were reviewed and revised. There was a change of focus from environmental outcomes to a broader, more ecological, social and economic approach. This shift aimed to help remove obstacles experienced by schools and reflects the emphasis put on ecological, social and economic development by Baltic 21E.

One of the first Green School Award schools – Alsterbro School in Nybro.

Alsterbro School is a small, nine-year comprehensive school with 120 students. It is set in a rural location in southern Sweden. The playground has a new recycling station with solar-powered composting. A dam construction and herb garden are already underway and, inside the school, pupils have created recycling centres in every classroom. It is within this context that seven pupils have started to environmentally certify their own homes. Step one has been to review energy consumption. Step two will be to check items bought by family members, and to encourage them to choose eco-labeled products. This will be followed by composting and recycling. In addition, pupils will certify a further household. Pupils are currently working on step one. They have taken it in turns to borrow one of the school's five electricity meters to measure electricity consumption of televisions, videos, CD players, toasters and other household appliances. As a result, pupils have discovered that more electricity is used when appliances are switched off by remote control, and have persuaded their families to stop using remote controls to turn off their appliances. Pupils were asked to report on the results of their survey in front of the whole school during an Environmental Day. Energy consumption at school has also been measured, resulting in several reforms, both outside and inside. These include new ventilation and the installation of light sensors and water-saving toilets and showers. All lights have also been fitted with low-energy bulbs. Further details about this case study are available at: <http://www.internat.naturvardsverket.se/documents/education/educadok/scope.htm>