

# Erasmus Summer Internship Report

August 20th

# 2010

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Company: Sortiva  
Country: the Netherlands  
Task: Conducting a CO2 Footprint  
Time: May 2010 – August 2010

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## Introduction

As a student of the MITIM Program at LUT I had to do an obligatory summer internship between my first and second year. I applied at quite a few, but finally found one close to my home town in the Netherlands. Thus even though this report is in the category of 'international internships' it was not much of a challenge for me. For the first time in 5 years I lived at home, with my family.

I found the internship after an extensive search on international and Dutch job boards. I applied at the end of March 2010 for an internship which needed a student by February 2010, luckily they had not found the right candidate yet, and after one phone interview they offered me the internship for the summer.

This report will include some general tips on finding an internship, living in the Netherlands and I will try to share my experience.

## Company: Sortiva

Sortiva is a medium sized recycling and sorting firm operating in the recycling and waste industry with around 120 employees. With two larger firms both having a 50% share, these firms work with waste collection and energy creation from waste (incineration). The company has 6 locations, all in the north-west of the Netherlands with the main location, office and operating facilities in Alkmaar. For the football fans out there, the local team is AZ, although many employees support the larger Ajax from Amsterdam.

I worked in a room with 3 other employees of the Strategy and Market department who worked on new projects focusing on opportunities for the company. The building was fairly old, but sufficient to work in, some re-organizations took place where some space was created by moving one department to a different office building outside of Alkmaar.

My colleagues were very friendly, although football is not my main interest, I overheard many conversations about players, teams, leagues and of course the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The overhearing eventually led to participation thus I watched many of the World Cup games and increased my knowledge of the game substantially.

Besides the talk about football the colleagues were very interested in my topic, most people were just about business, but the attention of sustainability around them led to many questions in my direction on the issue.

## Task

The waste sector in the Netherlands is being pushed into sustainability, the main railroad constructor/maintenance firm Prorail recently developed the system where they are willing to pay 10% extra for subcontracting to firms who conduct proper sustainability reports. Therefore the construction sector is already very far in reporting sustainability, what happens next is that those construction firms demand sustainability reporting from their subcontractors, of which the waste sector is an important part.

During the national waste conference of 2009 a few of the larger waste and recycling firms presented their sustainability reports, Sortiva was not part of the leading firms and therefore it was decided that the company had to take action.

As the topic of sustainability reporting and CO2 Footprints was new to me, the first week was about reading guidelines, standards and company reports on what is actually needed for a sustainability report. This gave me a good idea on what actions were needed. Together with my supervisor we discussed which steps to take and how to gather the data needed to calculate the final footprint. The list below shows what my responsibilities were together with the challenges faced and what I have achieved in the end.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Define a reporting/calculation standard
- Set company framework (which daughter companies etc.)
- Analyze supply chain
- Collect Data (Energy consumption, Transport etc.)
- Analyze data, calculate CO2 emissions
- Write internal report
- Standardize calculation methods for upcoming years
- Give presentation to colleagues/management team

### **Challenges**

- Data was very scattered, many different sources/types of data
- Calculation tools had to be made from scratch (using MS Excel)

### **Achieved**

- Solid CO2 Footprint, with clear possibilities for future, comparison scans
- Positive feedback from company, impressed colleagues

What was important for the task to be completed was a clear planning on s and to define up front would be needed to complete the task. In my case this was a report, a calculation tool, a final count on CO2 emissions and the possibility for the company to conduct this scan again next year.

### **The Netherlands**

I must admit, the Netherlands was a very easy shot for me, I knew the language, had nothing to adapt to and could live with my family. Thus I cannot give any tips from my personal experience as a foreigner in the Netherlands. What I can do is give general tips on things you might need for an internship here!

### **Internships**

Internships are very popular in the Netherlands, especially for vocational studies (polytechnics) the internships are compulsory, but also university students are becoming more interested in gaining practical experience. There are different methods of finding an internship in the Netherlands; International job boards like monster.com have internship sections, but also many Dutch multinationals have internships, you could look at the websites of Shell, Philips, TNT (parcel service), Unilever, DSM, KPMG. Also consulting firms like Bain, McKinsey, Accenture, Deloitte, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young, Boston Consulting Group have offices in the Netherlands with internships; Finnish companies have offices too e.g. Wärtsilä, KONE, Nokia. To summarize, go online, go to company websites and see if they have possibilities in English!

### **Practicalities**

If you have found one, congratulations, most of these companies will be able to help you with housing, travel and compensation. On average one would get around €500 per month + housing

covered. Internships are possible in the summer but more common would be a internship for 6 months or even a full year. Many students sub-let their room for the summer months or the period that they are on a study exchange, so this is a possibility. Rooms like these can be found on [www.kamernet.nl](http://www.kamernet.nl) which charges you only for replying to a room, you can search for them as much as you want.

Travelling around the country is very easy with public transport, they are currently implementing a system where one chip card will work on any bus, tram, metro and train around the country. There are direct trains from Amsterdam/the Hague to Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and cities in these countries are easy to reach. A good idea would be to look beforehand on [www.nshispeed.nl](http://www.nshispeed.nl) if you want to book cheap tickets in advance. A return trip Amsterdam – Paris is €70, Berlin €90 and Dusseldorf €38. There are also cheap flights with Ryanair from Eindhoven airport and EasyJet flies from Schiphol airport (Amsterdam). Also Air Baltic flies indirectly from Lappeenranta to Amsterdam, this is the flight I took, I paid €130 one way.

### **To Do**

There are many things to do in all the cities, Amsterdam of course being the most popular destination. You can try the very popular coffeeshops, visit museums, go to night clubs, see old buildings, take a tour of the canals. Other interesting cities are Utrecht, the Hague, Rotterdam and further away Groningen and Maastricht are very pretty and lively student cities. Also outside the cities are many places to visit like the ‘Zaanse Schans’ a set of old windmills used to empty lakes to create land for agriculture. The islands in the north are nice to visit for a day, one can go bike riding or go to the beach; Texel is easily reached by train and ferry.

### **Conclusion**

I hope this report has been interesting and useful for you to read. My internship experience was very valuable, especially the ‘hot topic’ of sustainability can be useful for my future career. As a Dutchman I always enjoy being in the country but do look forward to future travels to Finland/Russia and beyond. If you have any questions about internships or staying in the Netherlands please do not hesitate to ask and email me on: [sebastiaan.muller@gmail.com](mailto:sebastiaan.muller@gmail.com)!