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# Accenture Innovation Awards 2013

## De Groene Tulp

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UNIVERSITEIT TWENTE.



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# ABSTRACT

The Accenture Innovation Awards is an annual event that promotes pioneering entrepreneurs and innovation in general in the Netherlands. The Groene Tulp Award is one of eight awards that can be attained during this competition. It honors innovative concepts that do have the potential to have a significant impact on sustainability.

An internship is part of the curriculum of the Sustainable Energy Technology program (SET, UTwente). This report presents all learnings and insights acquired during the organization of the Groene Tulp Award 2013, an internship that started in April 2013 and ended in December 2013.

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# 1 | INTRODUCTION: PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATIVE START-UPS IN THE NETHERLANDS

## SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

According to the famous Brundtland definition, sustainable development is characterized as follows:

*"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

Currently, we at best meet a quarter of these conditions. We are able to meet most of the needs of people in the 'northern' world, people in the south are far less lucky and for future generations in both half's of the world we can only hope a novel mode of living and consuming will limit, and, if possible undo, the damage former generations and the people currently populating the planet have done this far.

## SUPPORT AND PROMOTION FOR INNOVATORS

Innovation and entrepreneurship have always been key drivers for progress in society and, considering the field of sustainability, promising innovations once more deserve our utmost focus. Novel developments in technology, business models and communities will pave our path toward a truly sustainable future.

Developments in science and technology certainly do happen, although not as fast as one might hope. Furthermore, investments in and implementations of the outcome of research and development programs will have to be increased in order to accomplish global sustainability goals. One of the well-known instruments used in order to promote progress is government subsidy, but even granted money cannot buy you everything. Often, lack of financial resources is not the (only) problem that is preventing or slowing down success for sustainable innovators. Regularly, start-ups just have difficulties reaching their target audience. In some other cases, their inventions are so revolutionary that potential business partners and end-users feel they are just too good to be true.

For these entrepreneurs, conferences, trade fairs and other networking events are of great value in bringing their message across. Closely related to these forms of promotion, awards and other forms of acknowledgment can do an even greater job in propelling messages about the benefits and potential impact of new inventions. Award-winning technologies and business models always are one step ahead of the competition, both in terms of convincing prospective clients and in acquiring valuable attention in mass media.

### ACCENTURE. TECHNOLOGY – CONSULTING – OUTSOURCING

Accenture is one of the world's largest consultancy and outsourcing firms, mostly known for their IT practice but nevertheless impressively active in almost all other thinkable industries. Across the world, Accenture employs over 275.000 people. The Netherlands is one of 56 countries in which this company of American origin is active. The main office of Accenture Nederland is based in Amsterdam. Almere and Den Bosch situate two extra, much smaller offices. Most of the time however, the majority of Accenture's Dutch workforce (about 2.400 people) is stationed at offices of Accenture's clients.

*Accenture is one of the world's largest consultancy and outsourcing firms. Active in more than 50 countries, Accenture employs over 275.000 people.*

Accenture's activities are grouped in five main industries; Communication, media and Technology; Consumer Goods and Services; Resources; Health and Public Services and Financial Services. Almost all companies listed on the Amsterdam Exchange Index (AEX) are amongst Accenture's client group, furthermore Accenture Nederland works together with national and regional governments, larger hospitals, universities and charities.

### ACCENTURE INNOVATION AWARDS

The Accenture Innovation Awards were organized for the first time in 2007 and have their origin in the Consumer, Media and Technology practice of Accenture Nederland. The aim of the event was to give an overview of all innovative start-ups in the IT branch and to help the large companies amongst the client base of Accenture NL to connect with the smaller start-ups and their inspiring ideas.

These aims have remained the same but over the past few years the event has grown significantly; gradually, all other industry practices joined in the organization of the event. For every one of the five industry-groups, one award (Blauwe Tulp) is granted yearly for the most innovative entry in its respective field. Winners are elected by expert jury's, consisting of board members of Accenture's clients, politicians and academics.

Next to the already mentioned aim (and motto) of connecting innovators in the Netherlands, the Accenture Innovation Awards serve an important role in bringing forward Accenture's vision on innovation and sustainability and in gaining a positive brand image for future clients and employees.

*Every year, over thirty students help organize the Accenture Innovation Awards during their internships.*

With respect to that last goal, the Innovation Awards itself also serves an important role in the selection and recruitment of new employees; annually, more than thirty (graduate) students help organize the event during their internships.



MAJORITY OF PEOPLE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING THE ACCENTURE INNOVATION AWARDS

#### TEAMS AND ORGANIZATION

The organization structure of the Innovation Awards could more or less be broken down into seven sub teams. Five of them were directly connected to one of the industry specific awards. Those teams all consisted of 3 to 5 full-time interns, plus several Accenture employees active in the respective field that dedicated a few hours a week to the organization. The sixth team, with similar build-up, was dedicated to the 'Groene Tulp Award'.

Besides these six teams there was a central group, responsible for all common affairs (website, social media, press releases, collective events, et cetera) and for coordination between the industry specific teams. This central team consisted of six full-time interns plus a number of highly involved Accenture employees with several years of experience in organizing this event.

## GREEN TULIP AWARD

In 2012, a new Innovation Award was brought into existence: The 'Groene Tulp', for innovations in the field of sustainable development. In principle, all entries competing for one of the five industry specific 'Blauwe Tulpen' also are eligible for the Groene Tulp. All entries are judged by a separate jury, on three aspects: sustainability, inventiveness and (potential) impact.

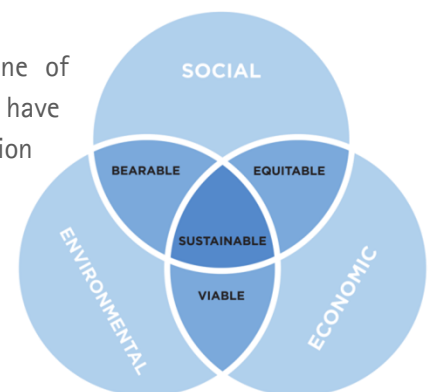
*De Groene Tulp Award is attainable for all pioneering companies, striving to make the world a better place through entrepreneurship.*

Through the years, more and more participants in the Innovation Awards could be categorized primarily as 'green' innovations. Mostly, those inventions did score reasonably well on other aspects, granting them recognition in the existing competitions. However, as their numbers grew, the introduction of a separate award dedicated to sustainability seemed like a logical next step. Therefore, last year the Groene Tulp Award was initiated to honor innovations that not necessarily ranked highest on criteria valued by jury's judging the individual, industry specific, Blauwe Tulpen but that may rather have an enormous impact on sustainable progress.

*Participating innovative concepts cover the full spectrum of sustainability.*

De Groene Tulp competition is open to concepts operating in all pillars of sustainability; Environmental, Social and Economic. That said, companies combining one or more of those aspects obviously have a slight advantage. After all, it is often the interfacial space between disciplines where greatest inventions and progress takes place.

Out of almost thousand concepts striving for one of the five Blauwe Tulpen, over 30% qualified to have a go at the Groene Tulp Award. Specifics on selection criteria, judgment procedures and timelines will be addressed in chapter 3.



ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY



## 2| OBJECTIVES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEAR FUTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

### PERSONAL GOALS

In order to acquire relevant experience in the field of expertise of the students, the Sustainable Energy Technology program requires all students to perform an internship. After spending some time looking for an internship abroad I reached an agreement with the Fraunhofer-Institut für Solare Energiesysteme (ISE) for a research internship in the field of energy-storage by means of high pressure electrolysis. Shortly thereafter, an earlier application for an internship at the Accenture Innovation Awards in Amsterdam also proved successful.

After a somewhat slow start I suddenly had to choose, and choose fast, between two very different but at the same time almost equally appealing internship opportunities. The option in Freiburg provided me the prospect to contribute to a high tech and in depth research on energy storage, the theme that has my utmost interest within the field of sustainable energy technology. Furthermore, it provided an opportunity to brush up and improve my German and to experience a nice city in the south of Germany.

The second opportunity, the one I favored, presented me with a chance to explore a much greater number of innovations in the field of sustainability. While not as in depth as a single research into one specific upcoming technology, this kind of work seemed even more valuable in respect to my ambitions for the near future. For over a year now, I have been working enthusiastically on WattisDuurzaam.nl (WattisSustainable.com), a newsblog on sustainable energy innovations. Taking part in the organization of a well renown competition for innovative concepts seemed like an excellent opportunity to step-up those activities. All in all, during my bachelor, I already spent a few months working in a laboratory. The organization of a large event seemed to provide a vastly greater opportunity to acquire new experiences and to work on new skills closely connected to the type of career I hope to kick-off after my graduation.

In short, my personal goals for this internship were:

- Explore and assess numerous novel green technologies.
- Study and evaluate various (new) business models.
- Experience the marketing, shaping and organization of a large event.
- Work with an interdisciplinary team of students, analysts and consultants.
- Come into contact with pioneering entrepreneurs in the field of sustainability.
- Try-out a range of activities vastly differing from the type of work engineers normally perform.

Chapter 5 of this report will reflect on the goals stated above.



## RESEARCH GOALS

Most internships performed within the Sustainable Energy Technology curriculum require the student to perform some kind of research for the hiring company. In the case of the Innovation Awards, the gathering and generation of new knowledge certainly is one of the main goals but it is somewhat hard to formulate research questions connected to this goal.

As mentioned before, for Accenture, this event is a means of scouting for great innovations that might be of value for its own practices or might be of help in the operations of Accenture's long term clients. As such, the scope of the research is extremely broad and, therefore, far from academic.

That said, the fairly high number of participating concepts itself to some extent provides opportunities to perform analysis. While the dataset does not meet, and is not meant to meet, scientific standards, certain understandings can be retrieved from almost every large dataset. In this case, one of the most valuable insights is found in the central topics addressed by participating entrepreneurs. After all, if a multitude of pioneering entrepreneurs thinks starting a business that addresses a certain need/problem is a profitable idea, this might very well be a significant indicator that things may be about to change in that respective field of work.

In chapter 5 of this report, key findings and trends recognized in data collected on entries aiming for 'De Groene Tulp' will be presented.

## COMPANY GOALS

For Accenture, organizing the Innovation Awards serves several goals. First of all it is an excellent way to strengthen ties with major clients; the main event and several sub-events are quite informal but with most attending guest, ranging from manager to board member level, all working at Dutch multinationals or other large organizations, all events present valuable openings to discuss challenges that client companies might face. Of course, Accenture is more than ready to assist in solving those challenges, preferably in cooperation with relevant and highly appreciated Innovation Awards contenders.

A second goal is to attain valuable 'free' promotion in nationwide papers, relevant radio and television broadcasts and specific niche magazines. A positive article on innovation and entrepreneurial successes, authored by journalists employed by the publisher or broadcaster themselves, often has much more promotional impact than paid advertisements in the same media. Spreading the innovation message and connecting that positive message to the Accenture brand is an important factor in Accenture's marketing activities.

A last company objective that may be served by organizing such a large event is to attract potential employees. A great number of (soon to be) graduates of relevant educational programs is involved in organizing the event. In this report, no section is specifically devoted to reflecting on these company goals but several illustrating successes and letdowns are addressed throughout the text.

### 3 | ACTIVITIES: EIGHT MONTHS PACKED WITH FRUITFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

#### ONBOARDING

My work at Accenture started on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The first two days I took part Accenture's new hire program. Together with over fifty new employees – a melting pot ranging from fellow interns to (highly) experienced hires – we were introduced to Accenture's values, policies, works council, intranet, et cetera. Furthermore, we received our laptops and joined in various teambuilding activities. A great start and a good way to get to know future colleagues and the company as a whole.

*A great start and a good way to get to know future colleagues and the company as a whole.*

In the days following the 'new hire days' I got to know fellow Innovation Awards interns that started in months prior to April. They provided me with material and documentation on earlier editions of the Innovation Awards. Priority number one at this stage was to search for start-ups and innovative concepts eligible for participating in the Innovation Awards. Registrations for the competition however did not open until the beginning of May so in these first weeks I found opportunities to assist in activities not directly connected to the 'Groene Tulp'.

*Personal notes:* For most of this period, I assisted with copywriting, graphical work and communication planning for the general Innovation Awards website. Furthermore, I promoted Sustainability24, I volunteered in a campaign selling PV-panels in the 'Zuid-as Solar project' and I helped out with an introductory market research on (electric) car sharing programs in The Netherlands and Belgium in specific and for Europe as a whole.

#### RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The Accenture Innovation Awards are open to any innovative concept launched within the Netherlands. The only limiting condition is that participating inventions, products or services have not been publicly available for more than three years. After six successful earlier editions, the Awards Innovation Awards are fairly well-known. At the start of the registration period a press release and some attention on relevant blogs resulted almost immediately in the partaking of over fifty concepts. These entrepreneurs apparently were sufficiently eager to compete. Unfortunately, finding and persuading the great majority of interesting concepts took a lot more effort.

## RESEARCH

In April, we prepared a preliminary list of concepts we would like to invite so with the publication of the registration form we could immediately approach a great number of prospective participants. First of all, concepts that joined in earlier editions of the Innovation Awards were evaluated once more. Remarkable concepts that still met the limiting criterion of not being older than three years and/or that significantly altered their operations since their last entry were approached to re-register for this year's edition of the competition.

The largest resource for discovering interesting start-ups and promising innovations were several niche blogs on sustainability and/or entrepreneurship. Browsing through numerous articles published over the last years, the list of great and refreshing innovations got longer and longer. Over twenty news websites were first searched thoroughly and later checked periodically in order to find the best of the best in the start-up field.

A second resource were university websites and the pages belonging to incubator and accelerator programs. Almost all Dutch universities, as well as most 'Universities of Applied Science (HBO-scholen)', have a program devoted to promoting entrepreneurship. Moreover, many regions without an institute for higher education have a central organization that aims to connect start-ups in their vicinity. Websites of incubators, business clubs and similar organizations proved to be a fantastic resource for finding somewhat younger start-ups and/or other innovative firms that somehow not yet had reached significant attention on the aforementioned blogs.

*Websites of incubators, accelerators and local business clubs proved to be a fantastic resource for finding somewhat younger and/or lesser known start-ups.*

Additional resources were pages belonging to other start-up competitions, trade fairs, conferences, et cetera. For me personally, a large collection of magazines like 'De Ingenieur', 'Technisch Weekblad' and 'WaterKracht' helped me find another great deal of concepts that not yet had reached our attention via online media. Also creative use of Twitter and LinkedIn resulted in a substantial addition to the target list.

*Personal notes:* My work with WattisDuurzaam.nl granted me somewhat of a head start; first of all, over fifty concepts that I published about did directly met the criteria for competing for the Groene Tulp Award. Furthermore, many of the online sources suitable for this kind of preliminary research were already among the sites I visit regularly. All-together, it was quite easy to form a list of well over 400 concepts fit for the Groene Tulp. Above that, skills acquired in the SET-program enabled me to quickly assess sustainability claims made by the various concepts that were brought forward by me and my colleagues.

## RECRUITMENT

Now that research had indicated several hundreds of potentially interesting concepts, the next stage was to get them to actually join the competition. As mentioned before, for a small portion of targeted concepts the simple notion of the well renowned competition was enough to convince them to subscribe.

*Almost half of all participants registered itself as being sustainable. This enabled us to predominantly aim at the most promising innovations.*

For many others however, it took (much) more perseverance. While for some people, clarifying the idea of the Innovation Awards and all its (potential) promotional and networking benefits was sufficient to get them to join, others did only want to partake after announcement of the (cash) prices connected to the awards. Unfortunately, precise contents and amount of those prices has been somewhat unsure for a bit too long. With some of the sponsoring partners, exact agreements on the sum of prices were reached in the last months prior to the finals. Registrations had already been closed several months earlier.

Other concepts just did not had the manpower available to seriously compete, either because their teams where to small (several start-ups) or because higher management blocked the participation (mostly subdivisions of larger organizations). For another group of promising innovations it was hard to even get into contact with the responsible people at all.

*Personal notes:* In this phase I emailed, called and visited a great number of interesting prospects. Furthermore, I visited numerous conferences, trade fairs and other relevant gatherings. Through my work for WattisDuurzaam I often receive press-invitations, enabling me to visit otherwise ridiculously expensive seminars or granting me access to nonpublic events. For the first months, I averaged on about two events a week, some of the most interesting ones were: InterSolar (Munich, Germany), SmartCity Event, Syntens Innovatie Top100 and Springtij Festival (Terschelling). All these events enabled me to directly approach pioneering innovators, extremely helpful considering the recruitment for the awards but also highly inspiring and motivating for me individually. Next to the methods mentioned above, Twitter and LinkedIn proved to be valuable tools. Especially in getting into contact with firms that were hard to reach via traditional routes (larger companies apparently value social media higher than replying to mails addressed at general (info@..) accounts).

Since the Groene Tulp Award was open to entries originating from all separate industries it was not necessary to focus on quantity; almost half of all participants registered itself as being sustainable. This enabled me to predominantly chase the most promising innovations. That turned out rather well; while I might not have contributed the most in absolute numbers of entries, a considerable percentage of concepts that I introduced to the competition ended up reaching the finals (both for the Groene Tulp and in respective industries) and/or earned a spot on our Innovation Market.

## TARGETED MARKETING

Cold calling and other forms of direct contact were most important in reaching targets related to participation numbers. Nevertheless, visibility in online, offline and social media did play an important role in reaching our target audience. NuZakelijk, Emerce, MOL-Blog, Bright, Energiea and DuurzaamBedrijfsleven.nl were some of the most important media partners for the Innovation Awards. Considering social media, the Popular Choice Award was a valuable instrument in reaching visibility on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

*Personal notes:* Considering marketing I had looked forward to have a shot at getting articles published in magazines and blogs outside our direct media partners. Unfortunately, the Accenture PR department was (justifiably of course) slightly wary of interns approaching media directly. I did get a well-received article published in Discovery Channel Magazine but after that I was nevertheless asked to discontinue these kind of activities.

On my own blog WattisDuurzaam.nl there were obviously less constraints, furthermore I prepared a number of articles for the Innovation Awards website and Accenture's Blogpodium. Less relevant in the recruiting of participants for this year's Innovation Awards but undeniably very enjoyable to do were a series of five guest blogs featuring all Groene Tulp finalists, published on DuurzaamBedrijfsleven.nl.

## CONTINUOUS AND CLEAR CORRESPONDENCE

In order to streamline communications throughout the full competition, all registered participants were coupled to one of the interns. Every participant thus had a single point of contact and every intern was responsible for all correspondence with a certain number of assigned contenders. Responsibilities ranged from ensuring participants did complete and, if relevant updated, their registration to helping people prepare for their pitches during jury-events and eventually the final.

*Every participant thus had a single point of contact and every intern was responsible for all correspondence with a certain number of assigned contenders.*

*Personal notes:* Given the somewhat exceptional status of the Groene Tulp, initially the decision was made to only couple contenders to interns connected to one of the five industry teams. Rather soon, when the number of participants rose, my Groene Tulp colleagues and me did have to release the burden for some of the other interns. From that point on we were assigned all concepts whose innovative qualities primarily lay in the field of sustainability. Furthermore, when the judging for the separate awards progressed, concepts that did not proceed in the industry connected to their 'buddy' but did reach the next levels for the Groene Tulp Award got handed over to our team. In the end, I have been the point of contact for well over fifty participants.

## SCREENING AND PRELIMINARY SELECTION

Nearly half of the total of  $\pm 1000$  challengers registered itself as being 'green'. Obviously, it was too much to ask the full Groene Tulp jury – almost all high level employees of Accenture's top clients, therefore very busy – to seriously assess around 500 concepts. Therefore, preliminary screening had to be done.

The first selection round was performed bi-weekly, throughout the full registration period (May 1<sup>st</sup> until mid-August). With every batch of new entries, concepts were quickly judged on their (sustainability) claims. Every so often, those claims were somewhat farfetched but on the other-side, some of the entries that did not recognize their own potential considering sustainability were added to the Groene Tulp competition as well. After these first shifts, we ended up with 335 concepts worthy of partaking in the Groene Tulp Competition.

Secondary to this sifting process, these preliminary screenings served as a means to check if all aspects of sustainability were sufficiently covered throughout the entries. If somehow a certain category of innovations seemed overpopulated in respect to other significant themes in the field of sustainability, this was an indication we should steer our recruitment efforts somewhat more towards the other categories.

*After three rounds of screening and progressively stricter selection the list of almost 500 Groene Tulp entries got trimmed down to a manageable Top35.*

With 335 concepts left, the task at hand was still too large to hand over to the expert jury. Immediately after the closing of the registrations we therefore started with a more in-depth research into the participating innovations. Here we looked at aspects like:

- Ingenuity: technical, social and economic inventiveness.
- Impact on sustainability: aspects like CO<sub>2</sub>-reduction, benefits for society..
- Uniqueness: is someone doing more or less the same, within the AIA-entries, within the Netherlands or within the rest of the world.
- Business potential: Intellectual property, what markets could be reached, what alternatives are available.
- First Impression and achieved successes: What kind of media-attention did the concept acquire, how does the website look, does the start-up have paying customers, etc.

After a succeeding selection, based on rankings performed individually by all (3) interns, the amount of contenders was reduced to one third. The last pre-selection was performed by the full Groene Tulp team. After several hours of discussion this last selection round before the actual jury process started resulted in a Top35 with the highest ranked concepts.

*Personal notes:* All in all this really was a team effort and luckily our team was pretty complementary, consisting of people with backgrounds in business administration, economics, international affairs, physics and engineering. That said, the majority of entries was fairly technical, and most of my team was somewhat less tech-savvy. Therefore, I often enjoyed clarifying the challenges addressed and answers invented by many of the more high tech innovations.

*One of the skills the Sustainable Energy Program thought me very well is the ability to quickly but nonetheless critically asses sustainability claims.*

Besides that, I have spent many years reading on energy innovations green business models. This enabled me every now and then to filter out entries that appeared innovative at first but actually just copied existing technology, or that were based on solutions inferior to existing technology. One of the skills the Sustainable Energy Program thought me very well, and that did really came in handy in this phase, is the ability to quickly but critically asses sustainability claims.

## JURYBOOK

Now that all entries were ranked internally, the time had come to present the participants to the jury. In practice, this meant a jurybook had to be developed. This book incorporated all data provided by participants on registry. Unfortunately, not all participants filled out every detail and some of them even made a mess of their concept description. Especially this description was highly important as it is the first and often only impression busy jury members will be able to get on the entries. Therefore some data cleaning and editing work (correction of misspellings and grammatical mistakes) had to be executed. After the contents were suitable to send out to the jury a template had to be designed that efficiently and esthetically presented all available data.

*Personal notes:* Firstly, together with three other interns, I took on the task of correcting and/or rewriting the concept descriptions for all ( $\pm 1000$ ) participants. After that, I designed and worked out the jurybook for the Groene Tulp jury. The Top35 that was internally decided on did get a prominent spot in this jurybook but all (335) concepts that made the first cut were included in the book, granting all jurymembers a full overview of all contenders. Preparation of this document did force me to acquire several new skills in data management and document lay-out options. Alongside the jurybook I also developed an interactive ranking form (with a little help from a PDF expert).



## JURYMEETING & FINALISTS

After a rather hectic two weeks of internal rankings and preparation of documents, the jurybooks and ranking form were sent out to the jury members in the first week of September. This granted the eleven jury members a little over two weeks to perform their own evaluation of all concepts and return the ranking forms.

In mid-September, all individual rankings were collected and worked out to form the official Top15 for this year's Groene Tulp Award. All participants that made the cut were invited to prepare and present a pitch during the jury meeting in the evening of October 1<sup>st</sup>. That same evening, directly after the pitches and thorough questioning of all partakers, the competition was trimmed down further to end up at a total of five finalists, displayed on page 28.

*Personal notes:* In this stage a lot of communication efforts were required. All concepts that reached the Top15 had to be invited, all participants that did not make it had to be informed as well. Since the rankings in parallel competitions happened at more or less – but not exactly – the same time, all messages had to be aligned with other teams via the respective 'buddies' tied to individual concepts. Since I was responsible for quite a large number of concepts, this work took the best part of my time in September. In the last week of September the jury meeting itself had to be prepared, I had to scheme an efficient ranking process and produce all necessary materials (posters, ranking forms, etc.).

## SPRINGTIJ FESTIVAL

A small but significant spin-off of the Groene Tulp Award is an addition to the program of the Springtij Festival. Springtij is a four day sustainability event, hosted at the Island Terschelling (26 – 29 September, just before the jury meeting of October 1<sup>st</sup>). The event, initiated by Wouter van Dieren (member of the Club of Rome) brings together over 350 people, many of them leaders in the field sustainability. Accenture is a major backer of the event and as such got the opportunity to organize part of the program.



As most of the program at Springtij happened to be somewhat alarmistic, dealing with topics like climate change and other environmental crises, Accenture chose to show a much more hopeful view on the future. Fifteen enthusiastic green entrepreneurs, selected out of participants of this year's Innovation Awards and former editions, got to present a short pitch during a plenary session. After that, the same innovators were available for further information and demonstrations at an innovation market. For Accenture, this fitted well with its message of promoting sustainable innovation and for all attendees it was a welcome intermezzo amongst all talks on doom and disaster. Last but not least, for the entrepreneurs it was an excellent opening to present their goods to a very specific and influential target audience.

*Personal notes:* Most of Accenture's part of the event was organized by one of my colleagues, while she was on holiday in I took care of pending affairs. At the event itself the whole team helped with preparations. Fortunately, there was plenty of time left to visit numerous of interesting seminars and workshops during the four beautiful sunny days at the island. A truly inspiring experience!

## INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

A fresh addition to the Accenture Innovation Awards was the Innovator of the Year Award. Up to 2013, the Innovation Awards provided an excellent podium for start-ups and smaller companies to present their innovations to the Dutch public. Great, but the innovations themselves always got most of the attention.

This year it was decided that the people that truly drive innovation and progress within the Netherlands earned recognition just as well. Therefore, the Innovator of the Year award was brought into existence. As there was no example to build upon, this competition needed to be devised from the scratch.

*Rob van Leen, Chief Innovation Officer at DSM, got elected as the first ever Accenture Innovator of the Year.*

The award was aimed at captains of industry, and thus almost automatically at high level employees and board members of Accenture's clients. Although almost everyone involved liked the proposal for the new award, people responsible for valuable client contacts were also bit wary to contribute at first. After a slow start nonetheless a respectable amount of reputable nominees and jury members were happy to join this new competition. With Rob van Leen, Chief Innovation Officer at DSM, this first edition of the Innovator of the Year Award did get a fantastic first winner and a lot of media attention. A great base to build upon in the coming years.



AWARD CEREMONY ACCENTURE INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR 2013

*Personal notes:* Probably somewhere in June I more or less accidentally joined the first brainstorm on the organization of this new award. After several subsequent meetings and proposals the decision was made to go forth with this new competition. As I was involved since the initial brainstorm, I sort of naturally joined in the execution of the plans as well. I helped develop the nomination and judging process, shaped the communication plan and assisted in the judging itself. A noteworthy amount of extra tasks, that, while similar to the activities related to the Groene Tulp, greatly added to my workload.

## PITCH TRAINING

During the jury meeting, it became clear that some of the contestants still could benefit from a bit of guidance and coaching in order to give an optimal performance at the final event. For that reason, we scheduled a collective pitch training for all finalists. This evening, the presenters could practice and polish their pitches, as well as prepare answers in defense off all critical and difficult questions that might arise after the actual pitch.

*Personal notes:* Most important in preparation for the training was an in depth research into the five final concepts, in order to prepare relevant and occasionally harsh questions on their technology, competitors and potential hurdles. During the evening, it was first of all enjoyable to meet and dine with the people behind the highest ranking innovations. Besides the practice rounds and the scrutiny of the concepts and business models we had great discussions on sustainability and marketing in general.

## INNOVATION EXPERIENCE: GROENE TULP BREAK-OUT

The Innovation Experience, the final event held on November 8<sup>th</sup> would be buildup out of several elements, spread over multiple areas (more on that in the following sections). For the Groene Tulp, most important was the industry 'break-out', a 75 minute session at the main stage.

Central in this break-out were the pitches for all five finalists: a two minute presentation followed by seven minutes of Q&A. Besides the pitches, the Groene Tulp Break-out featured an on stage interview with Marc Engel (CPO Unilever and chairman of the jury) and Wouter van Dieren (last year's host) and several other smaller elements that all had to be written and planned out precisely.



ONSTAGE INTERVIEW WITH MARC ENGEL AND WOUTER VAN DIEREN DURING GROENE TULP BREAK-OUT

*Personal notes:* 75 minutes to present all highlights experienced during the eight month campaign that led to the final event happened to be quite short. Several options, speakers and sequences have been proposed, revised, written out and discussed in detail to come up a program that was both feasible and satisfactory. In the execution during the actual session, most important was to get every speaker, pitcher and jury member at the right place at the right time, equipped with the right microphone et cetera.



## INNOVATION MARKET

Another element during the Accenture Innovation Experience where sustainability played a large role was the Innovation Market. On this central meeting space, between the main stage and all other stages, over thirty Innovation Awards competitors got to present their products, prototypes and services.

The Innovation Market first of all brought welcome entertainment between all central sessions, provided opportunities for the innovators to connect with everyone interested in their concepts and last but not least, the market served as an inspirational environment to discuss all learnings and experiences of the day during the closing drinks.



OVERVIEW OF THE INNOVATION MARKET

*Personal notes:* For a spot on this lucrative podium, concepts needed to be thought-provoking for a general audience and preferably interactive or able to give captivating demonstrations. A lot of the sustainable innovations I introduced to the competition did meet this criteria. Some of the concepts I arranged to contribute to this market were: Supiore Uno, a luxurious solar powered boat, FLOFLO, a DIY water drill, ThermIQ, infrared heating panels with the option to directly heat to specific areas (saving energy in the rest of a room) and VillagePump, a hand powered water purification installation.

Not directly linked to the awards but nonetheless impressive was the SmartFlower, an enormous PV installation inspired on the sunflower, complete with solar tracking and folding technology. During the InterSolar convention in Munich I first bumped into this inspiring machine. After the event I contacted the Austrian company with the proposal to present a SmartFlower in Amsterdam during the Innovation Experience. The big device got a nice spot directly next to the entrance of the venue and served as an elegant and sustainable landmark during the day.

## TREND REPORT

After the event of November 8th, one last big task remained. The development of a report that presents all insights, highlights, speakers and winners of this year's Accenture Innovation Awards. These reports serve as reference material, indicating trends in innovation throughout the years. Above that, they are often used as promotional gifts for Accenture's clients and off course they are a nice memento to send out to participants.

In past years, these reports were arranged by the individual industry teams, discussing matters specifically relevant for those sectors. This meant there was little connection amongst the individual reports and there happened to be large variation in publication dates: Often, the first reports were ready several months after the final event and some even took almost half a year to be completed.

Obviously, this provided room for improvement. This year, the ambition was stated to work towards a more centralized report, which also should enable us to publish a lot quicker. Preferably in the first weeks after the final event. Another aim was to present something a little more inventive than a simple hardcopy report, it deals with an innovation event after all.

*Personal notes:* In mid-April, two weeks after the start of my work at Accenture, I received a fresh copy of the Groene Tulp Trend Report 2012. It surprised me a bit that it took over five months before this publication was available, the event it discussed was understandably all-ready forgotten by most. As I was involved in the website team at that moment, I proposed to work towards a digital trend report in order to be able to process and present the learnings of the Innovation Awards 2013 a lot faster.

Luckily, I was not the only one with this kind of idea. Together with people responsible for the marketing we initiated a number of brainstorm sessions. These led to two serious options: the first was a completely digital version, with all kinds of state of the art (web)technologies, animations, videos and infographics, optimized for viewing on all kinds of screens (tablets, smartphones, widescreens, etc.). The second option was a luxurious 'coffee table' book with great pictures, short stories and clever coupling to complementary digital media (by means of solutions like Layar or QRcodes) for further content.

Both versions were pitched and the entirely digital version got picked, predominantly because it should enable fast and streamlined production and publication. Fabrication of the technology (basically an advanced website) would be outsourced to an external media bureau but I got to work out several possibilities and produce sketches/prototypes that served as visual examples during progress meetings.

In the production phase, all industry teams (including the Groene Tulp) were responsible for content creation. In the case of the Groene Tulp, most important were articles on trends in sustainability and several video interviews with experts in the respective fields. My role in this phase was first to analyze all data available from the subscriptions and later to write out the articles together with my team (translated versions in section 5). Besides that I also prepared and later edited the video-interviews that would be included in the digital report.

## 4| TRENDS: NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

### TREND 1 | CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Currently, our approach to materials and products is mostly linear: We dig up raw materials, shape them into useful products, utilize them until they are either worn out or obsolete and then toss them in a waste bin. The circular economy is about preserving and increasing the value of products and raw materials. To some extent, the Circular Economy concept is highly comparable to the Cradle to Cradle principles, made popular by Michael Braungart and William McDonough.

Circular Economy however is more comprehensive, it includes not only the material cycles but also covers less tangible aspects like the shared and/or community value. Overall, the circular economy provides better business models for sustainable and responsible initiatives. Among the 335 entries competing for the 'Groene Tulp', 92 were labeled as circular concepts, making the Circular Economy the biggest trend recognized this year. In the paragraphs below certain subsections of the overall trend 'Circular Economy' are discussed.

*Among the 335 entries, 92 were labeled as circular concepts, making the Circular Economy the biggest trend recognized during this year's Groene Tulp competition.*

#### Opportunities for improved utilization of assets

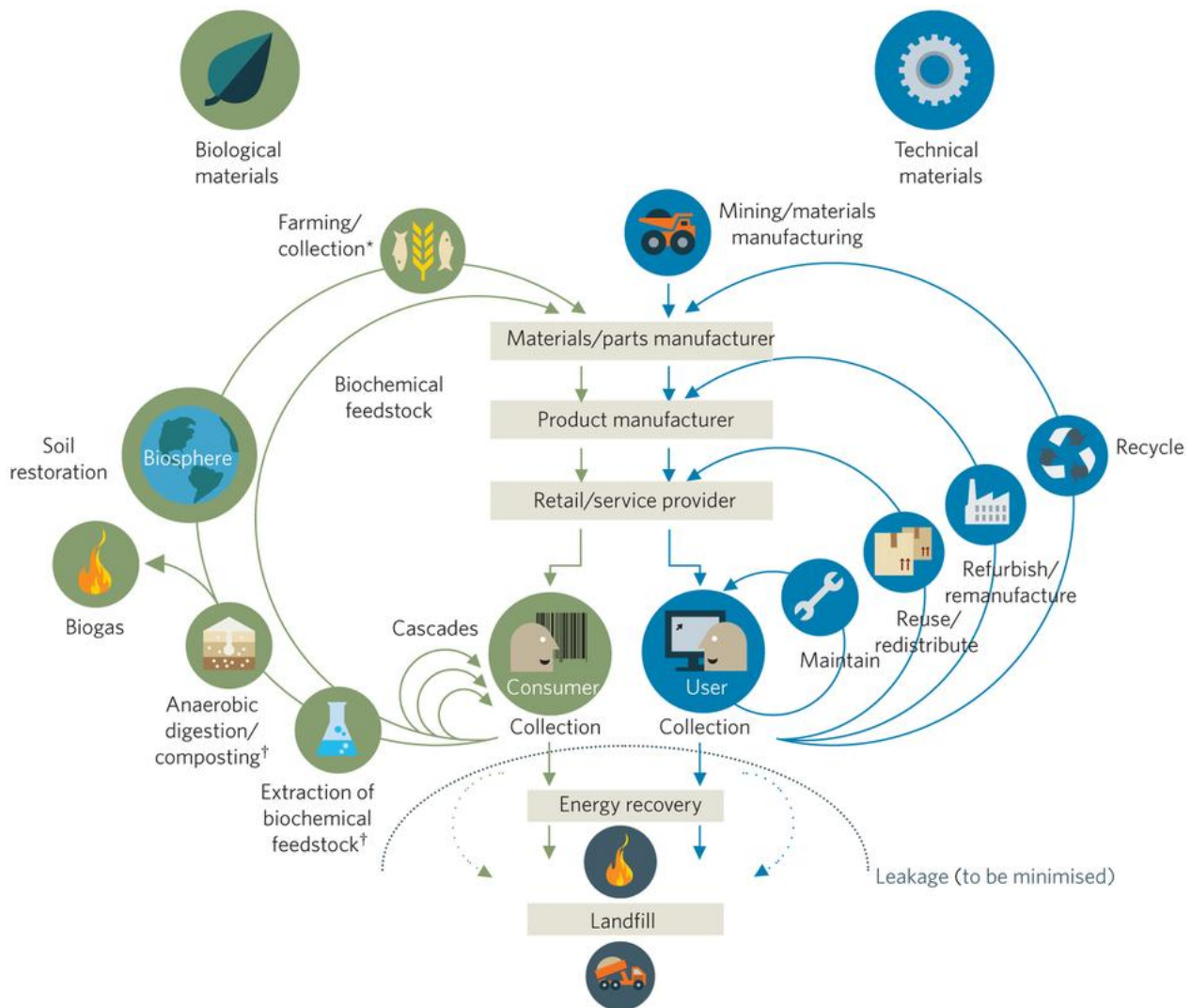
Younger generations increasingly focus on the performances assets can deliver, possession of those assets therefore becomes less of an issue. Cars for example, are hardly actively used for more than 10% of their lifespan. The average car spends the majority of its time in parking lots. In former generations, a car was perceived as status symbol but these views are now starting to change. When you merely distinguish a car as a means to get you from one location to the next, it suddenly does not make sense to own that car for all other times, when you are not traveling.

Various sharing or performance based leasing concepts cater the needs of people only wanting to use, and not necessarily own, assets. Sticking with mobility, AIA-participant Car2Go has a large fleet of small electric vehicles that you can pick-up anywhere in the vicinity of Amsterdam, drive for as long as you want and then park at your place of arrival. You only get charged for the time you used the car and can forget about it until you need a car again.

The smartphone app Toogethr revolutionizes the concept of carpooling and has already had great successes in connecting people traveling to music festivals and other big events.

### Alternatives to disposal

While the concepts of renting and leasing have been around for years in numerous trades (cars, computers, buildings), pioneering entrepreneurs recognize these business models do have great potential in regards to the circular economy as well. Inspired by architect Thomas Rau and his company TurnToo, several start-ups initiated leasing models for products you would normally just buy, use and dispose. Leasing and thus returning goods, even if they are obviously meant for single use, greatly enhances the separation of waste streams and streamlines waste collection. This way, good quality 'waste' material does not end up in a hodgepodge of severely diverse garbage but instead can directly serve as well-sorted raw material for fresh produce.



THE TWO COUPLED CYCLES IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY, ELLENMACARTHURFOUNDATION.ORG



Dutch Jeans label Mud Jeans launched their concept 'Lease a Jeans' and HaveP, manufacturer of corporate clothing and heavy duty work wear, launched a lease label with the name ReWORK. Customers can choose to either lease their clothes and pay a monthly fee or pay a fixed price at once. People opting for the fixed price more or less own the goods in the traditional sense but they are charged a deposit that is (hopefully) significant enough to still motivate the return of worn textiles to its original manufacturer after use.

*Leasing and thus returning goods, even if they are obviously meant for single use, greatly enhances the separation of waste and streamlines waste collection.*

For people hoping to downsize their wardrobe, online marketplaces The Next Closet and WeLoveSwoppen present an opportunity to exchange still wearable clothes with people hoping to refresh their wardrobe on a budget. Smartphone app IKringloop addresses a more general public and is developed to exchange redundant goods of all types, free or in exchange of a little money.

#### **Recycling as an art**

Often, things that appear outdated, redundant or even exhausted to one might still have enormous value for someone else. If you want to keep up with latest developments in the smartphone market for example, you will need to buy a new phone at least every other year. A two year old phone that is useless to us might however be a god's gift for someone in the developing world. Tech Returns prolongs the life of phones by buying/collecting outdated cell phones in the Netherlands, which it then sells in Africa. Via their 'Closing the Loop' Foundation, all sold second hand phones eventually are retrieved and subjected to 'urban mining'. On a somewhat larger scale, REGBAT regenerates traction batteries used in for example forklifts. The process almost restores the batteries to their original capacity. This way, disposal of dangerous waste is reduced and valuable components/materials will be used over and over again.

If it becomes impossible for an artifact to meet the needs of its original purpose, parts of that artifact might be still be exchanged or repaired to restore its value, and if that is not possible some components may be salvaged for re-use. If even that does not make sense anymore, the logical option often seems to disassemble the whole thing and release all embodied raw materials for application in a new product. Upcycle however sees another option; it recycles discarded bicycles into chairs, table lamps and belts. VerdraaidGoed repurposes old railroad timetables and outdated marketing materials into design artifacts and KAZMOK turns old conveyor belts into trendy suitcases and backpacks.

## SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FOOD CHAIN

The theme for the United Nations World Environment Day (June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013) this year was: 'Think. Eat. Save. Reduce your global foodprint.' That might have helped in the establishment of the second biggest trend this year; 67 out of 335 entries to some extent improved animal welfare, working conditions for farmers, or health benefits for the people consuming the produce. Other concepts reduced the percentage of food unnecessary wasted, the impact of production of food or they prolonged freshness due to innovative packaging, again reducing food waste. Among the food related concepts, several subrends have been recognized.

### What do I eat, and where does it come from ?

Consumers more and more expect manufacturers to be more transparent on the origins, contents and impact of their produce. The scandal with horse meat that was sold as (more expensive) beef throughout Europe really opened the eyes of consumers, leading to dissatisfaction with the food business and a desire to know exactly what ends on ones plate. That, at least during the peak of the scandal, led to more conscious choices in supermarkets and a rediscovered love for locally produced food.

## *'Think. Eat. Save. Reduce your global foodprint.'*

Many entrepreneurs eagerly catered to this new want. Among the entries for example, we see concepts like 'StreekChef' a concept that initiated national cooking competitions around purely sustainable, organic, seasonal and local produce. 'Fresh 24-7', a new venture of Deli XL (large supplier in the Dutch food sector), reduces the gap between consumers and food producers. This online food market enables restaurant and hotel chefs to order fresh ingredients directly from local farmers and growers. City farming concept GrownDownTown was founded with the aim of greening cities through growing of vegetables in urban areas. The company plans to open an informative and interactive food market at the Zuidas, close to Accenture's office in Amsterdam.

### Prevention of food waste

The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs estimates that each year 2.4 billion Euro is lost to wasted food in the Netherlands. This figure is based on the amount of food that ends up in the trash container in households, the number of products that are expired before they are sold and the amount of produce that does not even reach the shelves in supermarkets, sometimes because of truly perplexing regulations. Reasonable estimates indicate that in total over 30% of all produced food is never consumed. A real pity, both financially and environmentally.

In order to tackle unnecessary food waste, AIA participant 'KromKommer' salvages and trades 'ugly' fruits and vegetables that would otherwise be discarded, purely because of unusual appearance. Another range of concepts improves the preservability and/or packaging of fresh foods. PurePulse is a new type of ultrasound treatment that enables producers of fruit juices to preserve taste and freshness while prolonging the shelf life of the beverages.

*The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs estimates that each year 2.4 billion Euro is lost to wasted food in the Netherlands.*

The 'Pasteur Sensor Tag', developed by a consortium including chipmaker NXP, monitors the temperature and moisture content of foods during transport and storage, again resulting in better predictability of ultimate consumption dates for perishable goods. Packaging innovators HaloPack and Bonduelle both bring products to market that respectively reduce the impact and improve recyclability of cardboard containers and food cans. An entirely different approach is that of grocery shop Bilder & De Clercq: here all ingredients are sorted by recipe, in the exact appropriate quantities pro person.

#### **Animal welfare and imitated meat**

Livestock has an enormous impact on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the bio-industry progressively uses aggressive antibiotics and supplements that speed-up growth for farm animals. The overconsumption of meat has a direct impact on both our own health and that of the planet as a whole. In reaction, a lot of vegetarian concepts joined the Innovation Awards this year. Products like 'ProViand', 'The Dutch Weed Burger' and the whole range of merchandise available at the 'Vegetarische Slager' increasingly accomplish to mimic real meat and thus become a tasty and responsible alternatives for a growing amount of meat eaters. For the large majority that is not yet ready to abandon meat entirely, several concepts like 'Vair', 'Het Varkenstoilet' and 'Daafit' increase the wellbeing for farm animals and help to reduce the application of antibiotics.

#### **SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The theme sustainability has become a truly mature theme in business. In the past decennia it has made a transition from hobby projects and marketing tool towards a normal aspect of day to day operations. Even companies and organizations that in the past might have delayed sustainable development are now becoming pioneers within the sustainable movement. There is money to be made, which results in the realization of sharp performance indicators, clear reporting and continuous optimization. Amongst the participants in the Innovation Awards '13 we recognize a lot of software packages, hardware improvements and business models that cater to measure, analyze and optimize operations on our collective path towards a sustainable and profitable future.

### Increase profit through data collection and analysis

Corporate responsibility does no longer ends with a switch to fair trade coffee beans and two-sided printing. Many savings can be reached outside the direct influence of a company, at suppliers and other partners in the value chain. Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) provides an overview of the full environmental impact related to the production of an article. Starting at the extraction and gathering of raw materials, all the way to the disposal of every bit of packaging, all aspects connected to carbon emissions, energy use, water pollution and over ten other characteristics are measured and allocated to a single product. A thorough LCA provides consumers with a valuable instrument to help them choose responsibly and at the same time provides companies with a means to intervene effectively in a value chain in order increase sustainability and profitability.

*Life Cycle Analysis provides an overview of the full environmental impact related to the production of goods.*

Whilst very valuable, the research, monitoring, calculation and educated guesswork involved in the development of a LCA makes it a very complex, extensive and thus costly process. AIA participants CO<sub>2</sub>Management and finalist Ecochain offer services that significantly streamline the proper measuring and reporting of sustainability performance indicators. Their software packages enable companies to greatly reduce the efforts and costs related to Life Cycle Analysis, making the method applicable to less expensive and/or lower volume products.



LCA ILLUSTRATION, EcoCHAIN

Data collection is not an end in itself, the findings must be given a place in the business to actually be valuable. This requires behavioral change, and it is good to see that the innovations that actually use the LCA data to influence behavior and optimize processes. Cookbook 'Foodprint Cooking' for example, focuses specifically on food miles, energy efficient cooking techniques and other ways to minimize the impact of the daily food consumption.

## **Smart meters are becoming increasingly intelligent**

Over the past years, smart energy meters all-ready received lots of attention. With the rise of the number of dwellings that actually have such devices installed, the number of helpful and intelligent applications of data made available by the digital metering equipment increases as well. Green Tulip participant Greeniant is a great example of what is possible in this still developing area.

The Greeniant plug-and-play device connects to a smart meter and from that moment on analyzes the consumption of all devices within a household separately. Via a smartphone app, readings on the energy use of individual appliances thus are made available. This gives valuable insights, which Greeniant connects to tangible advice. An old dishwasher that consumes hundreds of dollars in electricity a year might for example be cheaply replaced by a more energy-efficient type, this will save money and energy quickly. Replacement of old appliances is an investment that often repays itself within three years.

At Business to Business level the increasing amount of (open) data also brings new opportunities for performance and cost optimization. 'Green' engineering firm ECORYS developed 'Intermodal Links', a search engine (routeplanner) for the shipping industry. Through combining availability and tariffs of over 50 firms involved in various transport modes – road, rail and water – the software calculates the optimal route for each package to be shipped. This reduces costs, optimizes occupancy rates for the transporters and ultimately saves fuel and emissions .

## **Tiny improvements with enormous impact**

Even in products and processes that appear 'completely developed', clever use of increasingly sophisticated computer technology and ever-growing databases still enables far-reaching optimizations. Consultancy firm Ecofys developed a technology that significantly reduces the cost of wind power measurements. With LIDAR technology, a kind of radar that uses laser light instead of sound, Ecofys is able to present accurate predictions on the return on investment for new wind farms. Especially for smaller wind development plans this greatly reduces the upfront costs.

Chemical giant DSM has developed an innovative coating for solar panels that increases the 'trapping' of the incident light, providing an 8% higher photovoltaic yield. It is based on countless tiny prisms that more or less lock photons between the coating and the semiconducting panel. Lastly, Green Motion Technology (winner of the Green Tulip Award'13) developed a sophisticated algorithm that optimizes the geometry of gearwheels. Gears designed with these guidelines produce 15 % less noise, vibrations and heat, resulting in an energy saving of 5% and nearly doubling the lifespan of mechanical equipment.

## TOP5 GROENE TULP AWARD 2013 (ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

### Carborex – DMT Environmental Technology



Carborex is a membrane system designed to improve the quality of biogas, or more specifically, to filter out the CO<sub>2</sub> content of gas originating from digestion of biological waste. Upgrading of this kind of gas normally requires large and expensive equipment. The small, plug & play system developed by DMT enables smaller farms and other companies producing organic waste to benefit from locally produced natural gas as well.

### LCA Made Easy – EcoChain



EcoChain developed a method and a software package that enables companies to streamline activities related to life cycle analysis. Instead of performing a study on one single article, EcoChain starts an analysis at full-factory or even company level. Later on, all used resources are allocated to single products at the end user. EcoChain brings down the costs of LCA-methods with an amount that seems too good to be true, but does work.

### FLO FLO – Stichting Holland Water Goes Africa



Stichting HWGA developed a simple but very effective system that enables people in developing regions to drill for water. The lightweight system is compact enough to be transported on a bicycle but once constructed it is a sturdy tripod of over four meters high. By using a heavy drill bit and a simple hoisting system, a team of four can drill up to 80 meters deep, even in rocky soil.

### Innovative Gear Designs – Green Motion Technology (Winner)



Green Motion Technology came up with an in depth algorithm that improves gearwheel systems. By optimizing over 60 geometric aspects at once, gears become over 5% more efficient in transferring power. Furthermore, stress, noise and vibrations are significantly reduced, resulting in a strongly elongated service life for all equipment incorporating the newly designed gearwheels.

### Sustainable seaweed farm – ZeeWaar



Zeewaar founded a sustainable seaweed farm, the first commercial one in the Netherlands. This summer the first produce was delivered to specialty shops. The seaweed is grown in de Oosterschelde and processed locally. Seaweed has a positive effect on the ecosystem it lives in, it absorbs CO<sub>2</sub> and converts it to oxygen. Besides this, seaweed is one of the healthiest foods for humans.

# LEARNINGS AND EXPERIENCES

In chapter 3 several personal goals were stated for this internship, as well as some objectives relevant for Accenture Nederland and a few research intents. The outcome of the little research that was possible have been presented in chapter 4. Throughout the report, the company objectives have been touched upon. In short summary:

The Accenture Innovation Awards 2013 reached a notable number of participants (almost 1000), strengthened relations with clients through several successful events, via  $\pm 150$  high level clients contacts that joined one of the 7 expert jury boards and via the new Innovator of the Year Award. Furthermore the competition reached great coverage in nationwide papers, broadcasts and on social media. All in all, the Innovation Awards have been a great success.

For me personally, the organization of the Innovation Awards has been particularly instructive and above all extremely enjoyable. In the following I will reflect on the objectives I have stated in the beginning of this report.

- **Explore and assess numerous novel green technologies.**

This goal certainly has been met. In the recruitment phase I have read about several hundreds of new inventions relevant for the field of sustainability. In the selection rounds that followed I got to assess all of them, with increasingly profoundness throughout the ranking process. While the Sustainable Energy Technology program and my work for WattisDuurzaam had already introduced me to an enormous amount of innovations there were tens of participants still able to surprise and inspire me.

- **Study and evaluate various (new) business models.**

Sustainability has a reputation of being costly and driven purely by idealism. Throughout the years several successful Innovation Awards participants have proved this prejudice to be (partially at least) false. This year's edition was no exception, a great number of contesters acquired significant funding and/or did all-ready serve an impressive client-base. Making money with 'green' initiatives certainly is possible, though it often requires fresh and creative thinking to do so. As an engineer, assessing the business potential of new inventions is something you do not do that often. This internship required me to develop this ability. Furthermore, it introduced me to inspiring answers to the, at times reluctant, attitude of established economic powers.



- **Experience the marketing, shaping and organization of a large event.**

Passively, this goal off course was more or less automatically met. Fortunately, I have had an active role in the marketing and the shaping of the event as a whole. The content work for the Innovation Awards website in the first months led to all kinds of other communication and marketing related work, both for the Innovation Awards in general as the Groene Tulp part of the competition.

For the Innovator of the Year Award, the jury meeting, Springtij and the final Innovation Experience I was decidedly involved in the shaping of the events. Furthermore, I have had a significant role in the development of the digital research report. During the development of communication and promotion plans during this internship I definitely discovered I enjoy a combination of technical know-how, creativity and critical thinking in my future career.

Considering the actual organization of events my role was mainly assistive, not leading. Nevertheless, the executive tasks – and the occasional problem solving – in preparation of and during live events certainly added to the overall learning experience.

- **Work with an interdisciplinary team of students, analysts and consultants.**

Again, an easy goal to reach passively. All in all, over 100 people were involved in the organization of the Innovation Awards. Within several teams, responsible for all kinds of varying sub-tasks, I have worked together intensively and pleasantly with at least thirty of them. This I regard as an enormous benefit in regards to the more customary research internships SET-students normally perform. Being responsible and accountable for numerous greatly varying projects, with varying groups of people, is probably more representative of actual work experience than performing a more or less solitary research embedded in a company.

Within the Innovation Awards team, everyone involved was very helpful and open to suggestions from the interns. That said, in some instances the large scale and accompanying procedures and regulations of the global Accenture organization sometimes proved to be a little barrier. Especially when external suppliers and service providers were involved or the Accenture brand guidelines had to be checked, some tasks took a little more time and effort than one might expect.

- **Try-out a range of activities vastly differing from the type of work engineers normally perform.**

During this internship, I have been able to significantly expand my skill set. The diverse activities, brain storms and responsibilities all separately added to the learning experience. And since all had to be performed, tracked and controlled in parallel it was instructive to develop a structured but flexible approach that kept everything feasible. All in all, that aspect, plus the experience in writing comprehensible articles on complex technology and the practice in the 'selling' of good ideas will probably be of most value in the coming years.

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

## RECOMMENDATIONS

During the past eight months I have been part of a team that came across as highly professional and complete. Nevertheless, some aspects could be streamlined somewhat more. I will not include details in this report but recommendations have been discussed extensively in internal evaluation sessions, some of them are already being implemented for next year's edition of the Innovation Awards.

## CONCLUSION

The Accenture Innovation Awards 2013 have been a great success for its competitors, Accenture and for me personally.

Participating entrepreneurs have been able to present their products and innovations to a large audience, both during the Innovation Experience and in various media. Many of them have made valuable connections to influential people that may significantly aid in the success of their concepts.

Accenture has had a great event that has been received well in papers, broadcasts and online media. Various sub-events like Springtij and other innovation exchanges helped strengthen bonds with existing clients and may very well lead to new business. Furthermore, several interns that helped organize the Innovation Awards 2013 are now working as full-time employees for the company.

I have acquired new skills and knowledge, enjoyed great events and experiences and met and worked together with motivating and inspiring people. Whilst the choice for this particularly lengthy internship has resulted in some delay regarding my graduation, knowing what I do now I would without a doubt have made the same choice once more.

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