

The typical week of a young sustainability professional

I graduated in the summer of 2016 with a Masters' degree in Chemistry, from there I started my career at Intertek in the Regulatory Affairs team with a focus on supporting



clients in the Chemical Industry. Recently I made a strategic move to refocus my career into sustainability. For the past 6 months I have been reading into the various sustainability issues which are currently “hot topics” in the industry, I have found this both fascinating and deeply refreshing. After finalising my decision to change career paths I was very lucky to be offered the opportunity of a brief secondment with the sustainability team and became a full-time member of the team at the beginning of the year.

As a Sustainability Consultant in the Intertek Health, Environmental and Regulatory Services business each day is different which allows me to learn and grow - in many cases making a positive impact on the sustainability goals of my clients. The team focusses on helping organisations develop and manage their sustainability initiatives. We work together closely as a global team with hubs on both sides of the Atlantic to deliver a wide range of expertise so we can deliver effective solutions to our board portfolio of clients and share and develop our knowledge, to ensure we are leading the way in making a difference.

As the ‘conscious consumer’ movement grows, environmental impacts from brands and companies are now being looked at closer and more conscious buying behaviours have been adopted thus industry is making sustainability a core focus, to reduce impact on the environment. I am driven by the will to make a difference and help clients achieve these sustainability goals. It is a very exciting time to embark in this field.

My training to become an auditor started a few weeks ago, and I may not have appreciated the depth, breadth and comprehensive nature of the requirements at the time (spanning Quality Management Systems, Environmental Management Systems and procurement and supply chain reviews, to Carbon footprinting activities, management of water, waste, and also development of staff and engagement with local communities... Just to name a few!).

My role as a Sustainability Consultant is predominantly focussed on the delivery of projects under the Framework Standard for Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products, BES6001; and Eco Reinforcement, the steel reinforcement sector-specific standard based on BES6001.

This week I am starting to assist our Senior Technical expert with the delivery of Life Cycle Assessment and Carbon Accounting projects in earnest as my initial training is over. The standard approach is to ensure data quality collection is given a high proportion of time and resources to ensure the highest possible degree of quality results. I'm very excited to learn and develop skills in the specialist SimaPro software and hopefully apply my knowledge of the ISO 14040 series (Environmental management — Life cycle assessment — Principles and framework) - which is a new world of standardisation for me. Luckily, I have a little experience in Science Based Targets that are relevant to GHG and zero emissions so will be able to follow the terminology in these projects.

Apart from the auditing training and LCA immersion work I am also lucky to be involved in a project delivering consultancy on Materiality Assessment (sustainability journeys start by establishing what issues are material to the client's business sector but also to their company's strategy and overlaying that with the perspective of broader stakeholder groups). Projects such as this are great and enable me to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the variety of ways that are possible to deliver results clients typically seek without always understanding their options and steps to take to arrive at these. One client even said what I thought - sustainability is huge....it is! The mapping of the landscape of opportunities is new and exciting every time I join a project meeting with our experts presenting variety of approaches relevant to the client's degree of ambition and resources reflecting current industry trends.

One of my current projects involves assisting the Senior Team on a project for a Central European based beauty brand. The client has developed an in-house sustainability tool to enable assessment of their product range against carbon, water, biodegradability and eco-toxicity and other