

**MFS REPORT****Name****Year and term for exchange**

Agnes Ritzer

2023 VT

Country for the project

South Africa

Degree programme

Industrial Engineering and Management

MFS in Cape Town

Before departure

Traveling has always been a major interest of mine. When I learned there was an opportunity to combine the bachelor thesis with exploring a new country, I instantly knew I wanted to do that. My partner Alma and I wanted to explore a topic that was ocean related and decided to write about ocean plastic pollution. Cape Town became our destination of choice since it is a unique city with a coastline consisting of two oceans.

Not much preparation was needed beforehand. Since we only stayed for eight weeks, no visa was required. I asked some friends about recommendations for good neighbourhoods to stay in.

Upon arrival

We came in the middle of February and stayed until mid-April. Our project didn't involve any other organisation or company, so we started immediately as soon as we arrived. We had our first interview within a week and spent our first time there getting in touch with important stakeholders.

Financials

In general, Cape Town is less expensive than Sweden. However, some areas are more pricey since it is still a very touristy town. Food was cheap, but accommodation was more expensive than we expected. Due to load shedding, we often had to leave the house to sit in a cafe for wifi, a cost we did not anticipate.

Accommodation

We stayed in three different Airbnbs. All of which were located around the city centre. We asked friends for recommendations on neighbourhoods beforehand, which was very helpful. Booking a place with 24/7 security or good fences is recommended.

Project

Our project was to investigate sources of ocean plastic pollution and explore possible mitigation actions. The majority of our project consisted of getting an understanding of the issue. It is a complex problem with various socio-economic factors involved. We did observations on beaches and surrounding areas. We also interviewed stakeholders, such as recycling companies, beach clean-up organisations, and politicians. The hardest part was to get in touch with the right people and have them spare time to participate in an interview with us. Overall, the people we got in touch with were very helpful and could guide us in a way forward.

Country

South Africa is a beautiful country with fantastic scenery. Cape Town, in particular, is a wonderful city with two oceans and surrounding mountains. It is a very multicultural place that brings a culinary experience from all over the world. People were in general friendly and showed a great deal of hospitality. However, the biggest cultural shock was socio-economic inequalities. The history of apartheid is still present, especially notable when it comes to segregation.

Leisure and social activities

With Table Mountain national park so close, hiking was inevitable. We also spent much time at beautiful beaches. Cape Town has many nice restaurants, which is perfect if you love food and wine. We also visited some vineyards in the surrounding areas. None of us had ever been on a safari before, so we also spent one weekend visiting the Addo Elephant National Park in Port Elizabeth. Highly recommend renting a car and driving around along the shores of Cape Town.

Sustainability

It was not always easy to live sustainably in Cape Town. Primarily since we had to travel by Uber a lot, even if the distance was short, that was recommended, and we did not want to take any unnecessary risks. When it comes to recycling, only one of our three accommodations had recycling services.

Our project's main SDG was number 14, Life below Water. Specifically, 14.1 "reduce marine pollution from land-based sources." We also worked toward goal 11, Sustainable cities and communities, and goal 12, Responsible consumption and production.

Other recommendations and observations

If you have the opportunity to travel and do your thesis as an MFS, I highly recommend it. However, I recommend finding an organisation to do it with. Even though it was doable to conduct it independently, having an organisation or company lead the way and help us with contacts would have made a lot of difference.