



## Opportunity for funded Master's Degree in Geography at the University of Victoria (UVic)

UVic's Environmental Governance Group ([envirogov.org](http://envirogov.org)) at the University of Victoria (UVic) in British Columbia, Canada is seeking applications for a Master's student to conduct research on environmental governance and political economy of cocoa in Cameroon. With support from a Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant, Dr. Sophia Carodenuto (UVic) and Dr. Juliet Lu (University of British Columbia) are offering a 2-year funded graduate Master's Research position for the project "[Tracing Forest Risk along Commodity Chains](#)." UVic Geography offers competitive funding packages. Details about the graduate program can be found [here](#).

### Project overview

TRACC examines how sustainability initiatives seek to govern commodity-driven deforestation through tools such as traceability systems, geospatial monitoring, and due diligence requirements. Focusing on cocoa and rubber supply chains, the project asks how sustainability initiatives "see" deforestation, what remains invisible within these systems, and how responsibility for environmental change is assigned across global commodity chains. Particular attention is given to the implications of these initiatives for smallholder farmers, land access, market inclusion, and environmental governance.

The successful applicant will contribute to the cocoa component of the project through research on the political economy of cocoa production and trade in Cameroon. As sustainability regulations and traceability requirements increasingly shape global cocoa markets, understanding their impacts on producers, traders, and local communities has become an urgent challenge for both policy makers and industry actors.

### Job Description

The successful applicant will be based at the UVic's Department of Geography, but work with a larger interdisciplinary team of researchers, including Dr. Lu's team based at UBC. The Master's research project will examine how sustainability initiatives, traceability requirements, and emerging deforestation regulations are reshaping the cocoa sector in Cameroon.

The student will conduct fieldwork in Cameroon, working with stakeholders across the cocoa sector to understand how different actors perceive and respond to evolving sustainability requirements. Field research will include semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and policy analysis, with opportunities to engage directly with farming communities, cocoa traders, exporters, government agencies, and civil society organizations.

The position includes one year of graduate coursework in theory and research methods, followed by the design and implementation of an independent research project. The successful applicant will gain training and experience in qualitative research methods, political economy, environmental governance, and global commodity chain analysis while contributing to an internationally collaborative research initiative.

### Qualifications

In order to apply, applicants must have obtained a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, Environmental Studies, Geography, or related field. Strong written and oral skills in French and English are a requirement for a successful applicant, and applicants will be expected to demonstrate excellent communication,





writing, and organizational skills. Those with work experience will be preferred, with particular preference for those with policy analysis in the African context. The ideal candidate will have a strong interest in, and potentially work experience in agrifood commodity or supply chain sustainability policy. The ideal candidate should also be highly motivated to work independently.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The University of Victoria is committed to upholding the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and human rights in our living, learning, and work environments. In pursuit of these values, we seek students who are eager to actively participate in creating a respectful, collaborative, and inclusive research community.

We welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds and actively encourage applications from members of historically and systemically marginalized groups, including Indigenous Peoples, Black and racialized persons, persons with disabilities, women, and members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. We recognize that excellence can be demonstrated through diverse experiences, perspectives, and career pathways.

The Environmental Governance Group is committed to fostering an inclusive research environment that values diverse forms of knowledge and promotes respectful engagement with research participants, communities, and partners in Canada and internationally.

### **Benefits**

The University of Victoria (UVic) Department of Geography is proud to be a space for high quality and conscientious research and teaching. We are an interdisciplinary unit, and much of our work is possible thanks to close partnerships with community members and groups, both locally and around the world. You will be part of an exciting graduate program that brings together students with diverse backgrounds and interests to learn together in a supportive environment.

### **Expected start date**

September 2027.

### **Application**

As soon as possible, interested applicants should send to Dr. Sophia Carodenuto ([carodenuto@uvic.ca](mailto:carodenuto@uvic.ca) subject line “2027 TRACC Master’s position”):

1. a cover letter detailing how they meet the above listed qualifications for this master’s position. Cover letters should explicitly identify how previous academic and/or work experience are related to the skills required for the advertised position.
2. a CV detailing academic achievements, conferences and publications (including links where possible), and
3. unofficial transcripts

Only those candidates of interest will be contacted for an interview, so we ask that you do not send follow-up emails regarding the status of your application. We will review applications until the position is filled. Deadline is December 31, 2026 but early applications are highly encouraged.

