



Proposed MA topic

Governing agroforestry at the timber, cocoa and mining frontier in Ghana

Tropical forests are under strain in southwestern Ghana. This strain comes from a variety of factors, including the production of global commodities such as cocoa and gold. The Ghanaian government has created gazetted forest reserves to preserve forest cover, but they have become insufficient to sustain national forest regrowth targets. Outside reserves, farmers also engage in enterprises that work towards forest regrowth. In Southwestern Ghana, cocoa farmers in particular have started engaging in agroforestry enterprises to provide much needed shade for their crops and added timber revenue to their farms, in what can be called an agroforestry system. This Master project will examine the benefit opportunities and the regulatory bottlenecks that agroforesters face, particularly as their enterprises are entangled with other land uses (gold, timber, cocoa).

The originality of this project lies partly in linking research on the political economy of agroforestry with an emerging global initiative called REDD+ (Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and land Degradation), that addresses deforestation through the production of a global market for carbon credits. Ghana actively engages in REDD+, in part through agroforestry restoration efforts on farms. REDD+ is still in its infancy, and whether it should go forward or not go is still an open question. Answering this question requires more knowledge on the challenges and opportunities that cocoa farmers face in their agroforestry enterprises. The district of Wasa Amenfi is a good case to generate such knowledge because cocoa farmers have started agroforestry enterprises, and these are entangled with competing land uses such as timber and gold production. The master project will focus specifically on tracing conflicts of interest, benefit sharing and the regulatory bottlenecks agroforesters face in this context. It will be conducted in collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and it hopes to contribute to its project *“Advancing REDD+: Mobilising private investment for community-based, carbon-intensive landscape restoration”* launched in 2013 in Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico and Ghana and will inform IUCN’s work on restoration. Among the questions we would like to explore are:

- What farmers engage in agroforestry and why?
- How do other local land uses (gold, timber, other cocoa farmers) facilitate and constrain agroforestry initiatives?
- What challenges do agroforesters face in relation to tree tenure?
- What other entrepreneurs do they share agroforestry benefits with?
- To what extent are existing land and forest regulations enhancing and challenging agroforestry enterprises?

These questions are indicative, and the Master student is expected to tailor them to her/his own interests. This project will include a couple of months fieldwork in Wasa Amenfi under the supervision of Gretchen Walters and Muriel Côte.

For further queries please contact Muriel Côte (muriel.cote@geo.uzh.ch) and Gretchen Walters (gretchen.walters@iucn.org).