

Graduate Internship Opportunity

Summer 2025

PROJECT TITLE

Circular Economy Hub Project to stimulate green business expansion in three forestry-impacted communities on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast: Create a robust and inclusive community engagement plan to guide project development

ORGANIZATION

Synergy Foundation

Project Background

This Project will be conducted with/for the Synergy Foundation. Since its inception in 2013, [Synergy Foundation](#) has focused on innovative projects and programs that push boundaries, support hundreds of businesses, and turn visionary ideas into tangible action. Our mission is to catalyze change and guide our communities and local economies towards a regenerative future. Based in British Columbia, Synergy Foundation is a registered non-profit with a proven track record in program management and business community engagement.

Synergy's work centers on three key areas: green business (www.bcgreenbusiness.ca), circular economy (www.project-zero.ca), and food security (www.get-fed.ca). We specialize in fostering local green economies and partner with local governments to help them achieve their sustainability goals.

The Synergy Foundation is developing Circular Hubs for three forestry impacted communities within the VI-Coast region, which have experienced significant job loss and economic instability from recent mill curtailment and closures, designed to build economic diversification, innovation, and resiliency. A hub is a community that serves as a central point for business, facilitating the flow of goods and services. Hubs foster innovation, workforce upskilling, resource recovery, product development, market growth and business transition training. These circular hubs will prioritize the diversion and repurposing of construction and demolition waste (C&D), a highly valuable yet challenging material for local governments that traditionally end up in landfills.

Project Description

This project's primary goal is to conduct preliminary research, develop a tailored engagement plan and gather insights from stakeholders to guide the development of Circular Hubs in three communities.

The scholar will:

1. Conduct research to identify best practices of successful hubs both locally and globally.
2. Develop materials to support community outreach and consultation.
3. Participate in facilitating community consultations, stakeholder interviews, and engagement events.
4. Document insights from consultations and interviews to create actionable reports.

This work will ensure that community priorities and opportunities are integrated into the circular hub development. The scholar will have a hands-on role in both preparing and executing engagement activities, with support from the Synergy Foundation team.

Scope of Work

This project focuses on stakeholder engagement as the first phase of Circular Hub development.

The scholar's responsibilities include:

- Research and Material Development:
 - Conduct a review of best practices for circular hubs.
 - Prepare a jurisdictional scan of policies to support hub development.
 - Develop materials (e.g., agendas, surveys, and presentation slides) to support outreach and consultation efforts.
- Stakeholder Consultations:
 - Assist in planning and executing one in-person consultation session in each community.
 - Participate in key stakeholder interviews alongside the Synergy team, assisting in facilitation and note-taking.
- Reporting:
 - Analyze feedback and insights gathered during consultations and interviews.

- Prepare a best practices report, a policy recommendations report, and “what we heard” summaries for each community.

Key Deliverables

1. Best practices report: a concise summary of successful and unsuccessful circular hub models and key lessons learned.
2. Policy recommendations report: a scan of existing policies with actionable recommendations for supporting circular hub development.
3. What we heard reports: summaries of feedback from the three community consultations, including stakeholder priorities, potential partners, and opportunities for hub development.

Time Commitment

- May 1–May 15: conduct research on best practices and prepare a draft best practices report.
- May 15–June 6: complete policy scan and prepare a draft policy recommendations report.
- June 6–June 27: support material development and participate in community consultations and stakeholder interviews.
- June 27–Aug 15: analyze consultation feedback and prepare “what we heard” reports.

Preferred Skills & Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Community engagement experience
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills

Additional Project Requirements

Project will include travel outside Victoria for set up and participation in community consultation. Locations include:

- Cowichan Valley Regional District, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District and Qathet Regional District
- Familiarity or strong interest in circular economy, built environment and waste management is a plus.

Program Information

Dates: May 1—August 15, 2025

Compensation: Scholars are paid approximately \$31.80/hr for 250 hours of work (based on UVic Research Assistant pay rate)

Application Deadline: January 31, 2025

Contact: Laurel Currie (sustainability-scholars@uvic.ca)

[Visit our website](#) to learn more about eligibility and application requirements.