Cameroon’s Agricultural Policy Since Independence: Achievements, Challenges, and Future Prospects

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Foreword

Cameroon's agriculture sector has undergone significant transformations from 1960 to 2023, impacting employment, agricultural yields, productivity, and exports. Initially, agriculture was the backbone of the economy, employing over 30% of the population and contributing substantially to GDP. The sector specialized in cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and palm oil, which were critical for export revenues. In the late 1960s and 1970s, agricultural policies focused on state-led initiatives and the establishment of parastatals aimed at boosting production. Structural adjustment programs introduced in the 1990s after several crises encouraged privatization and market liberalization, which gradually improved productivity but also exposed farmers to global market fluctuations.

From the late 1990s onwards, the government launched initiatives to enhance food security and promote sustainable practices. Despite these efforts, challenges such as climate change, price volatility, and limited access to financing continued to hinder growth. As of 2023, Cameroon remains an agricultural powerhouse in Central Africa, with diverse agro-ecological zones supporting various crops. The sector is now seeing a shift towards agro-industrialization and value-added products. While agriculture's contribution to GDP has decreased due to the rise of the service sector, it still plays a vital role in employment and export earnings. The future of Cameroon's agriculture lies in enhancing productivity through innovation and sustainable practices while addressing existing challenges.

This report focuses on public and multilateral initiatives that have shaped the agriculture sector since the 19th century. It details investments, grants, projects, and approaches and is the first comprehensive report looking at agricultural policy development in Cameroon. I hope you use this report in whatever way to inform, educate, sensitize, and improve your practice because, together, we can usher in a new era of private-sector-led development in the agriculture sector rooted in free enterprise, property rights, and the rule of law.

CEPI Agriculture Council

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- AFCFTA African Continental Free Trade Area
- AGOA African Growth and Opportunity Act AU African Union
- CEMAC Central African Economic and Monetary Community
- CET Common External Tariff
- EC European Commission
- ECCAS Economic Community of Central African States
- ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States
- FDI Foreign Direct Investment FTA Free Trade Area
- GDP Gross Domestic Product
- GFC Great Financial Crisis
- INS Institute National de la Statistique
- NCCF National Cocoa and Coffee Board
- NTM Non-Tariff Measures
- UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- USA United States of America
- USD United States Dollar
- WFP World Food Programme

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Abstract

The report provides a comprehensive overview of agricultural policy initiatives, incentives and reforms between 1960 - 2022, the role of local and international institutions as well as parastatals in Cameroon. It provides a detailed description of the progression in agricultural policy from colonial times to present day. Each section details the context, challenges and opportunities associated with agriculture policy, financing and implementation. This report finds that agriculture spending is centralised at the level of ministries and the absence of post-evaluation reduces the impact of agriculture financing. Furthermore, there is a greater dependence on foreign partners, which reduces the autonomy of independent institutions such as IRAD. The findings show that better governance and greater incentives for privatisation will improve agriculture output and bolster food security. Initiatives such as the creation of IRAD and consultations with civil society organisations can enable policy makers to reach farmers in rural areas that are excluded from policy initiatives. However, the study also notes obstacles such as legislative issues and the need for comprehensive strategies to fully realise the benefits of agriculture financing for rural revitalisation. Agriculture financing offers a pathway to sustainable development in Cameroon by improving governance, boosting farmer capacity and digitising the delivery of agriculture policy and incentives. For maximum impact, impact assessments should be conducted annually, infrastructure should be developed and an inclusive policy-making environment must be sought.

Introduction

Cameroon is one of the most prosperous countries in Central Africa, with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth averaging **4% over the last decade** due to abundant agricultural land and petroleum. The agricultural sector is essential to the economy and contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction efforts. It currently accounts for **17% of GDP** and involves 70% of the economically active workforce **(WFP, 2023).** It plays a determining role in alleviating poverty and food security thanks to self-provisioning for over 2,000,000 households in the country and its role as a main supplier to neighbouring countries' urban markets. About 80% of food requirements are satisfied by domestic production **(WFP, 2023a).**

The country's main agricultural output can be divided into two main groups; namely cash crops for exports and food crops. The main export crops include cocoa, coffee (robusta and arabica), cotton (grain and fibre), rubber, palm oil, and banana. Meanwhile, food crops are rice, cassava, corn, sugarcane and plantains.

Cameroon is among the world's largest producers of cocoa and produced 330,000 tons of cocoa beans, putting Cameroon as the fifth producer of cocoa worldwide with an estimated total value of US$492 million **(National Cocoa and Coffee Board, 2022).** Between 2012 - 2016, for example, the country's cocoa total production rose by 57%. Cotton is equally important for Cameroon and exports reached US $257.84 Million during 2021 from US $198 million in 2020 **(UN COMTRADE, 2022).** However, we note that Cameroon's production is small compared to that of other countries across the world and production for 2016 was 23 million tons. Total exports were estimated at US $96 million, equivalent to 2.5% of the total value of the country's exports. Meanwhile, Cameroon's production of cotton fibre fell by14.5% compared to previous years due to unfavourable weather conditions. In comparison to, say, Burkina Faso, Cameroon's exports are less than that of Burkina Faso - estimated at 650,000 tons.

According to national accounts data, value-added from the primary sector averaged 4% between 2000 - 2020 and exceeded GDP growth (averaging 3.3%) but was relatively high in 2007 (5.9%) and 2008 (5.2%) and stayed high thereafter **(INS, 2021).** The government aims to boost the annual growth in economic activity from 2.9% for the 2006–2010 period to an annual average of around 5.5% for the 2010–2020 period, and ultimately to double-digits.

The authorities hope to achieve this by strengthening the rural sector to achieve primary sector growth of over 5%, in light of its potential benefits. Cameroon's agricultural policies are characterised by five-year development plans. In these strategies, agriculture was identified as a priority sector, and the government intervened through state-owned agro-industries, rural corporations, and indirectly through various support programs. Later reforms and the devaluation of 1994 tended to improve performance by allowing market incentives to play a role.

The agriculture sector grew in importance between 1960 and 1990, averaging 20% of GDP, before falling to 17% in 2022 as the share of other sectors grew as a percentage of GDP. The service sector now averages **50%** of GDP, while the manufacturing sector contributes 13% of GDP **(World Bank, 2023; World Bank, 2023).**

Although the share of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries has fallen as a percentage of GDP, it remains an important source of employment, with over 43% of workers employed in the sector (ILO, 2023). Despite its relative importance to economic growth, agriculture has industrialised slowly, and a greater portion of workers remain employed in the informal sector. Additionally, 43.6% of the population live in multidimensional poverty, driven by food price inflation and food poverty **(UNDP, 2023).** This illustrates the importance of the agriculture sector that has come to be underpinned by a range of domestic policies. Over the years, agricultural policy has been driven by the Strategy for Growth and Employment and the National Development Strategy (SND 30) more recently. The objective of agriculture policy in Cameroon is to;

- ***Ensure food security and self-sufficiency of households and increase farmer earnings***
- ***Contribute to foreign trade, job creation, and economic growth.***
- ***Improve the standards of living of rural populations.***
- ***Ensure the sustainable use of land resources and agricultural production.***

Agriculture has long been the main driver of the Cameroonian economy, but in recent times its contribution to the economy has declined. As of 2023, agriculture (including forestry and fishing), contributed 15% of GDP, while services contributed 53% and industry 26% **(World Bank, 2023).** But agriculture remains a major employer of the Cameroonian workforce. It is estimated by the ILO that 47% of all employment is in the agricultural sector, compared to 39% in services and 14% in industry. Agricultural labour productivity remains low compared with other sectors. The agricultural sector is dominated by small holders who farm less than one hectare of land and significant state intervention in some sub-sectors. The majority of farmers, who are small scale, produce about 80% of the country's food crops **(WFP, 2023).** These traditional farm enterprises employ limited mechanised practices and tend to have low productivity. However, the war in Ukraine and uncertain international prices have increased the cost of inputs, exacerbating the impacts of exogenous shocks on the sector. However, domestic policies have focused on improving the resilience and contribution of the sector to economic growth. In spite of these challenges, agriculture can become an important driver of economic growth if the economy successfully transitions from traditional agriculture towards diversified and commercially viable activity.

A crucial question, therefore, emerges. Why has the agricultural sector developed at a slow pace, trailing industrialised and emerging market economies in Africa? There are several factors that explain this such as deficient human capital, underinvestment, underdeveloped institutional and technical capacity and poorly executed policies to name a few. However, the role of the transition from the colonial-led institutions to modern institutions cannot be understated. In order to provide a clear and coherent development of Cameroon's agricultural policy, this report provides a succinct account of the development of Cameroon's agricultural policy, the nature and role of financing as well as the contributions of multilateral partners in the development of agricultural policy from 1960 until present day.

The report is divided as follows:

- **Chapter one** provides a comprehensive overview of agricultural policy incentives and reforms between 1960 - 2022.
- **Chapter two** looks at how the agricultural sector has been financed over the years.
- **Chapter three** examines the implication of such agricultural policies on three variables: agricultural output and food prices. Rather than take a dislocated view from other economic drivers, such as the value of the exchange rate, global commodity prices, and economic growth.
- **Chapter four** looks at the roles played by the **Institute for Research and Agricultural Development (IRAD)** in Cameroon's agriculture policy through projects and programmes.
- **Chapter five** looks at the role and contributions of parastatals to Agriculture policy in Cameroon followed by policy recommendations and a conclusion.

Chapter I: Main Agricultural Policy Incentives, Interventions, and Reforms

The evolution of Cameroon's agricultural policy can be divided into four phases. The first phase runs from independence to the end of the 1960s and is marked by a continuation of French and British colonial agricultural policies and institutions. The second, characterised by a proliferation of new agricultural interventions, covers the late 1960s to 1970s. A third phase marked by attempts at agricultural policy reform goes from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, and the fourth phase, dominated by agricultural policy liberalisation, began around 1990 and is ongoing.

Colonial Agriculture Policy and the Emergence of Institutions

The Germans' colonial agricultural policies and institutions in Cameroon between 1894 and 1916, the French between 1916 and 1960, and the British between 1916 and 1961, with the country partitioned under a system of dualism between European-owned large-scale plantations and Cameroonian peasant small-holdings (Bamou & Masters, 2007). Agriculture policy was directly linked to colonialism and the changing economic conditions and demands of colonisers. Great emphasis was placed exclusively on export crops, and the development of indigenous foods received little attention and was discouraged due to labour needs in European-owned large-scale plantations (Njinkeu, 1996). As such, the colonial administration took several measures to stimulate the creation and expansion of plantations.

Furthermore, large portions of land were expropriated from the natives and given to planters, preventing skills and technology transfers as well as greater management autonomy and Ntangsi (1988) finds that taxation and forced labour were used to ensure a constant and cheap labour supply.

Meanwhile, a network of transportation and marketing facilities were developed to serve plantation areas. During the second half of colonialism in Cameroon, the emphasis shifted to peasant production (uncompensated), which caused the rapid expansion of exports (Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement 1961; Bamou & Bamou, 1999). During this period, an attempt was made to expand peasant production via roads and railways in major-producing areas while agricultural institutions were created to support the sector.

Several agricultural institutions were created to market and extend farming products. The French created the 'Secteurs de Modernisation' (SEM), financed by FIDES (Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Économique) **(**Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement 1961**).** It provided a network of techniques and crop-oriented services across the agriculture value chain, from seed production, pest control, and agro-processing activities (rice milling). Furthermore, the SAP (Société Africaine de Prévoyance) provided credit while the Caisse de Stabilisation handled marketing **(Bamou & Masters, 2007).** Additionally, specialised research institutes were established for cotton production. Notably, Compagnie Française pour le Développement des Fibres et Textiles (CFDT), the Institut des Fruits et Agrumes (IFAC) for cocoa and coffee, and the Institut de Recherches sur les Huiles et Oléagineux (IRHO) for palm oil.

The British emphasised smallholders less and prioritised large-scale plantations operated by the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), Elders and Fyffes Ltd., and others. They created institutions such as the Department of Agriculture, Cooperatives, and Community Development. At the same time, the marketing of export crops was handled by the Marketing Board and research by the Department of Agriculture **(**Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement 1961**)**. This preceded the post-independence period.

The 1960s

The post-independence period was driven by the continuation of colonial agricultural policies as well as persistent institutional structures. Until 1972, the country was ruled under the system of Federalism (East and West Cameroon). In 1964, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Animation (DARA) was created under the Federal Ministry of Planning to coordinate agricultural development in both states **(Bamou & Masters, 2007)**. The extension system - as it was termed - was based on what is referred to as the diffusion model with three main features;

- ***It was focused on peasants as the primary agents for agricultural development.***
- ***It involved the transformation of peasants through the diffusion and adoption of innovations.***

- ***It relied on limited government intervention (research, extension, and availability of inputs) to improve autonomy and decision-making.***

This approach was adopted in the first Five-year Development Plan of the country (1961-1965) and to a limited extent in the second round (1966-1970). Signs of dissatisfaction with the peasant plan emerged in the second phase despite the satisfactory performance of the agriculture sector, with more significant increases from the areas under cultivation and not from yield grains. The second plan was driven by new forms of experimentation together with other forms of intervention structures in new forms. In 1972, the reunification between English and French Cameroon led to the creation of a new Ministry of Agriculture, which significantly modified the colonial structure (Daviron et al, 2004).

The 1970s

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a movement towards more significant agricultural intervention, like most countries. Inflation quickly eroded those gains, even in sectors that were previously left to the private sector such as input distribution and marketing of food crops (FAOSTAT, 2006). In Cameroon, government intervention and centralised decision-making focused expenditure on state plantations at the expense of small holders. There was equally an increase in indirect taxation for peasants via the marketing board, the Office National de Commercialisation de Produits de Base (ONCPB), created mainly for cocoa and coffee (Verlet, 2002). The period equally witnessed multiplication of new institutions and new methods of production recommended in the second plan from 1966-1970[1].

By 1970, ten parastatals had been created, and 14 were formed during Cameroon's third plan from 1971-75. The Fourth Plan, from 1976 to 1980 further expanded state interventions with some twenty new projects that were proposed but never implemented as donors were no longer willing to fund them. International donors have supported Cameroon's state-led agricultural interventions as agencies that were created had to be managed as quasi-private enterprises with administrative, technical, and financial autonomy and potential efficiency (MINAGRI, 1980).

[1] The second plan had recommended the expansion of the estate sector (either privately or publicly owned), rural settlement projects to move the population from densely populated to sparsely populated areas, specialised crop development corporations charged with organising and supervising the production of specific crops grown by small farmers, and integrated rural development projects stimulating production as well as providing social services.

Additionally, most projects sought to combine marketable output with basic farmer needs, which aligned closely with the approach to rural development adopted by donors and the international community in the 1970s. However, this system was costly and only had a marginal impact on total agricultural output.

Meanwhile, the emergence of new institutions and structures were counterproductive as agencies were supervised by different government ministries who did not coordinate their activities. The legacy of colonialism was poor management and perverse incentives, driven by poor knowledge and bad governance (Matiké & Kapto, 2001). Responsibility overlapped between agencies who equally worked at cross-purpose, and leaders were concerned with consolidating power. The poor performance of such an interventionist approach caused donor retreat and helped awaken government doubt about their approach to agricultural development - creating an imbalance between the effects of poor governance and top-down approach.

The 1980s

In 1997, the oil boom began, causing prices to rise for cocoa, coffee, and cotton. However, inflation quickly eroded those gains, and agricultural production was heavily burdened during the boom years. During this period, agricultural policy in Cameroon was mainly characterised by a misallocation of resources. The 1980s saw three distinct forms of resource misallocation. Firstly, the Dutch Disease misallocation due to unsustainable price incentives and limited investment in smallholder agriculture. Before the oil boom, the sectoral balance tended to lean against agriculture, with resources concentrated in a relatively small sector, producing not more than 10% of total agricultural output (Benjamin & Devarajan 1989, Blandford et al. 1995). These biases worsened during the boom, making smallholders less attractive, thereby increasing the number of unskilled workers in non-farm work.

A second misallocation occurred when government institutions due to unsustainable management structures failed to provide the relevant and financial support for the agricultural sector. Before the oil boom, decision-making was extremely centralised, resulting in heavy red tape and the fragmentation of responsibilities in the bureaucracy (Bamou & Douya, 2003). During the boom, this caused poor policy implementation and misallocation of expenditures to smallholder agriculture.

A third form of misallocation was the underinvestment in new technology. Although Cameroon did not have a public agricultural research and development program, few incentives for technology adoption emerged. As such, yields for most crops stagnated or declined (MINAGRI, 1980). All these problems became evident during the oil boom, but policy changes only occurred when the boom ended and after the debt crisis of the mid-1980 made reforms possible.

The 1980's were a reaction to several crises and agricultural policy during these years were reactionary. The agriculture sector was subject to quotas and restrictions, high import duties and price controls (Touna-Mama, 1996). After this period, the government of Cameroon decided to liberalise its markets and support greater market access. While the impact of falling commodity prices continued to impact the Cameroonian economy, the government chose to liberalise.

Ongoing liberalisation since the late 1980s

Faced with a fall in living standards after 1986, the government began implementing Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) supported by international donors. These SAPs involved reforms to public expenditure, the enactment and use of subsidies and strategies to improve governance and outcomes across the public and the private sector **(Ntangsi 1988)**. Meanwhile, sector-specific policy reforms of the SAPs include both liberalisation and privatisation. Those reforms targeted input production, technology transfer, and know-how through research, development, marketing, training, and information. Sanitary and phytosanitary measures and controls aimed to guarantee food security, diversify agricultural exports, and raise incomes in rural areas during this period.

The reform that attracted the most attention involved liberalising products and marketing. The Food Crop Development Authority (MIDEVIV) and the National Produce Marketing Board (ONCPB), which controlled the cocoa and coffee board, were liquidated with other development agencies **(Bamou & Masters, 2007).** Their withdrawal improved average incentives for many products and regions, with very few traders available, causing marketing costs to rise temporarily. This deterioration of local marketing conditions prevented farmers' production, limiting speed and new entrants into private trading to serve these markets. Liberalisation of international trade involved gradually abandoning quantitative restrictions and adopting a simplified tax system.

During this period of liberalisation, Cameroon adopted the 1994 Regional Fiscal Reform Program (RFRP) initiated at the sub-regional level through the Economic and Monetary Community for Central Africa (CEMAC), simplified the international tax system for agriculture products and reduced average taxation rates (Bamou et al., 2003). On the input side, an essential change was the Sub-Sector Fertilizer Reform Program (SSFRP) launched in 1987 with the assistance of USAID, and the Special Program for the Importation of Fertilisers (SPIF) launched in 1988 with the support of the European Development Fund (EDF). This program aimed to implement an effective private system for importing and distributing fertilisers.

However, Ntsama (2000) found that an oligopoly from importers enabled them to fix sale prices at unusually high prices. The author argues that the Sub-Sector Fertilizer Reform Program (SSFRP) and the Special Program for the Importation of Fertilisers (SPIF) programs were focused on serving existing importers rather than expanding market size (Ntsama, 2000). For example, the Sub-Sector Fertilizer Reform Program (SSFRP) needed to offer credit mechanisms to expand the number of farmers who could buy fertilisers, but this was not possible due to the slowdown in public spending that was driven by structural adjustment programs. As government spending fell, this was not replaced by aid from traditional agencies to boost local capacity as the emphasis was on imported fertiliser (Masters, 2006). The drop-in public-sector spending affected all services, including agricultural research for new crop varieties and farming techniques.

Despite the promising results of Cameroon’s agriculture research and the need to increase yield, funding levels fell significantly. In nominal terms, agriculture research institutes received CFAF 5, 910 million in 1984/85 (of which 95% were state subsidies) (World Bank, 2004; Matiké, Bidja & Kapto 2001).

Low Levels of Funding Negatively Impacted the Sector

However, funding rose to CFAF 5, 720 million only between 1992 and 1994, of which 58% were state subsidies (IRAD 1996). The public system for agriculture education was abandoned, with degraded facilities and poorly equipped staff. Despite covering a limited set of skills in a few regions, Matiké et al. (2001) found that training programs were unsustainable and current budgets and equipment insignificant, demoralising trainers. However, private educational institutions were more equipped with human and financial resources, but could not materially impact the level of output.

The national extension system was less affected by cutbacks, although this did slow down activities. The National Agricultural Extension and Research Program (NPARV) was launched in 1990 through MINAGRI - **then Ministry of Agriculture** - under the financial assistance of the World Bank, supporting agricultural extension services. Still, the value of extension to farmers was constrained by the limited availability of technologies from research.

After the Cameroon Agricultural Bank ('Crédit Agricole') liquidated in 1997, only a few parastatal or private agro-industrial enterprises offered agriculture loans (Bonaglia & Fukasaku, 2003). Small and remote farmers faced difficulties accessing credit, which caused production to slow. The growth of financial intermediaries was limited by high risk and limited availability of collateral, forcing farmers to rely on loans from family members and local informal lenders. There has been some micro-finance from donor institutions[2] and while this has been good, it doesn't make up for the deficit left by the government. Still, they were poorly distributed across the country and lacked the professional credibility with no links to commercial banks.

The New Forestry Laws

A critical and ambitious area for reform regards the use of forest land that was launched in 1994 under the new forestry law (Law No. 94-01). Reforms on using forests sought to clarify and enforce the rules with solid institutions, which enjoyed high political support.

The collaborative framework separated the functions of public and private actors to ensure that conservation is globally relevant and contributes to biodiversity rather than hinder local economies and use transparency and public information to fight corruption and vested interest. In the context of highly informal farming stakeholders and methods, these laws provided the framework to manage the environment while supporting various farming practices. These laws equally had implications for property rights in the agriculture sector. According to Kazianga and Masters (2006), changing property rights can have a powerful influence on the adoption and impacts of new technology in this context of cocoa, especially those farms that are planted in forest areas.

[2] The World Bank participated in funding the FIMAC (Investment Fund for Agricultural and Community MicroProjects) project which comprised 160 branches, 31000 adherents and it funded 3000 projects to the overall amount of CFAF 2 million during the period 1989-1998. Canada and France provided their backing to the Fund for Rural Savings and Self-Managed Credits (CVECA) project.

Finally, despite the withdrawal of the government from most agricultural activities, the semi-arid Northern part of the country has continued to benefit since independence from specific government policies (food grants, food crops production incentives, cotton extension and marketing services, etc.). These have been maintained over time with varying differences. Other regions have not enjoyed similar levels of support as they are relatively well-off in comparison to citizens in the Northern part of the country.

Self-sufficiency and Consolidation of the Agricultural Sector

The New Agricultural Policy (1990–1998) focused on consolidating achievements in both self-sufficiency and export income and the significant improvement of performance in the sector. It was implemented in a particular context where the government began adopting agricultural sector adjustment plans in 1990 to facilitate the emergence of a strategic framework favourable to private initiatives. Deregulation and privatisation measures aimed at reducing waste and finding more effective forms of governance were thus provided for. The NAP was assigned five objectives: (i) modernising production systems in the agricultural sector; (ii) ensuring food security; (iii) boosting and diversifying exports; (iv) developing agri-food processing; and (v) balancing production chains (Achancho, 2013).

Some of the NAP's achievements included: (i) successfully restructuring some state- owned enterprises, (ii) adopting new laws governing the co-op sector; (iii) promoting agricultural interprofessional organisations; (iv) liberalising marketing of agricultural products; (v) developing microfinance systems, (vi) implementing a new agricultural extension strategy; (vii) liberalising agricultural inputs trade; (viii) strengthening farmers' organisations and improve food security.

As part of the implementation of the liberalisation process, the State also did away with administered regulation, leaving agricultural producers little prepared for new relations requiring them to negotiate and develop contractual arrangements with service providers that were generally more experienced. However, none of the five sectoral objectives were met. The NAP was reviewed and reworked in 1999. It served as a foundation for the development of an integrated rural development strategy in 2001. By this time, over 40% of small-holders were increasingly excluded from the agricultural system and did not directly benefit from grants, technical training and export or production diversification.

2000 - 2010 Policies

The post-2000 period was marked by the development of poverty reduction and economic growth strategies that laid the foundation for additional economic and financial programs. IMF support was provided through a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) agreement, in exchange for reforms. Within the framework of the PRGF-supported program, economic policy took on a new direction, notably with the drafting in 2003 of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (IMF, 2006).

The PRSP recognized that the improvement in macroeconomic performance had not led to a corresponding improvement in household living conditions, despite the fact that economic growth had generated a solid increase in per capita income (around 2% per year from 1996 to 2001), and a significant 13-point decline in the poverty rate, according to the comparative results of the ECAM-I and II surveys (INS, 2002). The period of economic recovery that preceded the economic emergence of 2006 allowed the country to transition to medium- and long-term planning with a view to fighting poverty effectively and stimulating the economic recovery.

It was in this context that “Vision 2035,” which plans to make Cameroon an emerging and democratic country united in its diversity by 2035, was adopted in 2009. The Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP), also adopted in 2009, establishes the reference framework for government action over the period 2010–2020. It emphasised the role of the rural sector and sought to transition the sector towards rural semi-intensive and industrial production, designed to ensure security and self-sufficiency, industrial capacity and an improved trade balance. It equally provides the modernization of the rural sector, through four structuring programs: (i) developing food, animal, fish and forest production, (ii) improving living standards, (iii) sustaining management of natural resources and (iv) improving the institutional framework.

In 2003, Cameroon drafted a Rural Sector Development Strategy Document (DSDSR), which established the framework for all of the sector’s development action plans. This document was revised in 2006 and its action focuses on four pillars of intervention: (i) modernising the production system, (ii) improving the institutional framework, (iii) creating an incentivizing environment and, (iv) sustainable management of natural resources for agriculture and rural development subsector (Achancho, 2013; IFAD, 2019). The strategy aims to strengthen Cameroon's role as a sub-regional agricultural power, with a rural sector that acts as an engine for the national economy, ensuring food security for the population while promoting environment-friendly and sustainable development.

In response to the main challenges, the vision is based on four programs, the objective of which is to: (i) improve industry production and competitiveness; (ii) modernise rural and agricultural production infrastructures; (iii) sustainably manage natural resources; and (iv) improve the institutional framework and build the capacities of all State and private stakeholders. It must be noted that agricultural policy decisions, which were once very centralised, are now made in consultation with various stakeholders: ministries in charge of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development; Finance, Agriculture, and Rural Development; Livestock, Fishing, and Animal Husbandry; Trade; and Research, as well as decentralised regional and local authorities, producers' organisations, NGOs (to a limited extent) and development partners (IFAD, 2019). However, we officially call for greater inclusion of stakeholders. Cameroon currently has over 200 agriculture associations (CEPI, 2023), grassroot activists and community organisers. This brings the ratio of 1 association to 350,000 people. It is imperative that they are included in policy making, both locally and internationally.

In July 2003, with a view to assisting the implementation of the GESP through the National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA), the government signed the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) Compact with its participating partners (the African Union, Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS), producers' organisations, civil society, technical and financial partners, and the business sector) (NEPAD, 2023). Furthermore, a National Program for Food Security (NPFS) (2008−2015) was drawn up in 2007 to combat hunger and food insecurity and cut malnourishment by half, especially among the vulnerable households in rural and peri-urban areas, by 2015. The terms of the agricultural development strategy were given a boost by NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP).

Meanwhile, the World Bank-financed National Agricultural Extension and Research Program Support Project (NPARV–1998 to 2004) promoted the cultivation of food crops like maize, beans, potatoes, soybeans, and tubers as well as the enhancement of livestock production. It equally supported the production of non-traditional agricultural exports such as green beans, flowers, tropical fruit and cassava chips was also encouraged. This approach necessitated the strengthening of the extension services.

However, limited success was achieved in this regard due to unavailability of improved technologies. Another project in support of the PNVRA was financed by the African Development Fund, and implemented from 2000 to 2007. This project mainly concentrated on capacity building of the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD). The 2007 - 2008 Great Financial Crisis (GFC) caused a surge in public investments in the agricultural sector in the forms of allocations or commitments. But these did not produce any material results in terms of value-added, and have improved the resilience of the sector have yet to produce clear results in terms of greater added value in the sector.

Indeed, growth in the sector was estimated by 4.3% from 2009 to 2012, which was less than the growth obtained in the previous four-year period of 2005 to 2008. However, promising results were achieved in the cash and export crop sector, with an estimated increase of 5%. Higher levels of production did not meet domestic demand, which explains the country’s heavy dependence on imported products such as grain and rice.

Meanwhile, a large proportion of plantain and vegetable was exported to other countries in the sub-region (Gabon and Equatorial Guinea). The post-crisis years were characterised by an increase in the total budget expenditure, having averaged 4% during the 2004−2008 period, rose to 5.8% in 2010 only to fall again in 2011 and 2012 to 5%.

Likewise, the African Development Fund set up a centre, the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD) that focused on building the capacity of farmers. The project ran from 2000 to 2007 (AfDB, 2015a). Other initiatives aimed at increasing agricultural production, such as the Roots and Tubers Market-Driven Development Program (PNDT-2004-2012), Rural Microfinance Development Support Project (PADMIR-2010-2016), the Commodity Value Chain Development Support Project (PADFA-2010-2018), and ardent donors such as the

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) sprung up (Kouam et al, 2021). Recent policies include the Cocoa and Coffee Development Fund which will distribute CFAF 50 million over five years to Cameroonian farmers (FODEC, 2021).

For the livestock, fishing and animal husbandry subsector, the strategy aimed to increase pastoral and fishery production to satisfy not only the nutritional needs of the population and the agro-industry's needs for raw materials, but also to produce surplus for export. This objective will be pursued through four operational programs: (i) developing animal production and industries, (ii) developing fishery production, (iii) improving the health of livestock and zoonosis control, and (iv) establishing a support program to improve the sub sectoral institutional framework.

In parallel with the implementation of projects and programs, efforts were made in 2009, to improve the subsector's planning framework by: (i) implementing a program to improve the statistical information system for livestock, fishing and animal husbandry, (ii) developing a master plan for livestock sector development, (iii) initiating a process to draft a Code Pastoral, and (iv) drafting an aquaculture development plan. The sub-sector also received help from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE); their 2006 veterinary service evaluation revealed that the organisation of Cameroon's veterinary services did not comply with OIE standards (Achancho, 2013).

A gap analysis conducted in early 2011, when compared to the GESP, helped pinpoint the priorities to target in a five-year strategic plan to progressively eliminate the gap. Since 2008, the C2D (Debt Relief and Development Contract) initiatives, implemented as part of cancelling the country's external debt to France, has allowed for the formulation of actions to develop animal and fishery production; the World Bank has also resumed its support of Cameroon's rural sector. The government has taken measures to improve the institutional framework of both sub sectors—agriculture and livestock/fishing—through three programs financed by the Debt Relief and Development Contract with France as part of the debt cancellation. They sought to: (i) Support Program for the Improvement of Rural Sector Administrations (AMO) joint project (MINEPIA/MINADER) whose goal is to strengthen statistical analysis capacities and institutional organisation; (ii) support Project for the Renovation and Development of Vocational

Training in Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (AFOP); and finally, (iii) the Program for the Improvement of the Competitiveness of Family Farms (ACEFA) (MINEPIA, 2021).

For the forestry and wildlife subsector, the aim is to make Cameroon an ecologically viable country, whose forests and wildlife sustainably contribute to economic, social and cultural development. The strategy aims to improve biodiversity management with a view to contributing to economic growth and job creation in a context of sustainable development. This strategy is built on three pillars: (i) the development and sustainable management of forests; (ii) the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife resources; and (iii) the development of forest resources (Law No. 94-01).

This strategy is subdivided into four programs: (i) the program for the development and renewal of forest resources, (ii) the program for the conservation and development of wildlife and protected areas, (iii) the program for the development of timber and non-timber forest resources, and (iv) the support program for the management, institutional management and governance of the subsector. The Forest and Environment Sector Program (FESP), which has been in operation since 2003 and open to funding from all donors, as well as contributions from the private sector and civil and non-governmental organisations, aims to help implement Cameroon's forestry and wildlife resource sustainable management policy in an environment-friendly manner. The FESP has become the framework for all forest conservation, management, and sustainable exploitation activities.

The FESP Phase 1 (2009–2012) covered all of Cameroon. Its scope of intervention included the forest sector and the environment. Its objective is to implement a coherent framework for all interventions aiming to fulfil the objectives of the country's forestry, wildlife and "green" environment policy and to strengthen the institutional framework in order to implement the sustainable management of forest and wildlife resources policy on an ecological, economic and social level.

2010 - 2020 Policies

The post-crisis environment was characterised by official development assistance from the period from 2010 to 2020. The World Bank estimates an overall contribution of nearly CFAF

3,000 billion in terms of global ODA and the amount allocated to the agricultural sector is estimated at more than CFAF 900 billion, i.e., about 26% of the total aid received by the country (MINEPAT, 2021). Agriculture policy took a turn and became institutionally driven, underpinned by bilateral cooperation by France (SCAC/AFD), Netherlands (SNV), Spain (AECID), Canada (CIDA), Germany (KfW, GIZ), USA (USAID), Japan (JICA), South Korea (KOICA).

While official development assistance expanded, the government of Cameroon took steps to reduce spending, in line with its structural adjustment programs from multilateral institutions, even as performance was slower than expectations. The government cut spending on goods and services, subsidies and transfers and domestically expenditure by 0.5% of GDP, 0.1% GDP and 0.7% of GDP, respectively between 2016 and 2017 (MINEPAT, 2021). The fiscal deficit thus narrowed as the IMF forecasted, but it remained 2% above the IMF's program target of 3.1% of GDP. Consequently, the fiscal adjustment program required 2018 - 2019 to achieve the medium-term objective of 1.7% of GDP by 2020.

The National Food Security Program (PNSA) (2008–2015) was developed in 2007. Its overall objective is to fight hunger and food insecurity in order to reduce by half the number of people suffering from malnutrition, particularly in vulnerable households in rural and peri-urban areas, by 2015. The strategic aims are similar to those of the 2006 DSDSR: to (i) Increase crop, pastoral and fishery production by introducing improved and adapted varieties (breeds) and input supply. (ii) Secure production through water management, soil fertility management, environmental protection, and natural resource conservation. (iii) Improve producers' income, especially women's and young peoples. (iv) Improve village cereal storage systems, particularly in risk areas. (v) Improve the marketing and processing of crop, animal and fishery production. (vi) Take steps to improve the population's nutritional health. (vii) Set up and strengthen the food-crisis monitoring, alert, and rapid reaction system in risk areas. (viii) Strengthen producers' capacities and their support structures.

Furthermore, to tackle the food crisis that led to riots in February 2008, the government drafted an Emergency Plan based on a substantial and sustained increase in national production, mainly by reinstating the implementation of special agricultural programs, primarily for plantain, rice, roots and tubers. With decentralisation, pursuant to Decrees 2010/0242/PM and 2010/0244/PM of February 26, 2010, some powers relating to the promotion of agricultural production and rural development activities and the promotion of pastoral and fishing production activities were transferred to municipalities, effective the 2010 budget year. Furthermore, municipalities are already actively involved in forest and wildlife management. They manage the share of financial resources generated by municipal taxes on forestry concessions **(20%)** and supervise the management of the share belonging to neighbouring communities **(10%)**. Municipal councils also manage communal forests transferred by the State and are also involved in supervising the management of community forests and community-managed declared hunting areas (MINADER, 2010).

The role of institutions in promoting the agriculture sector

As one of the non-governmental stakeholders in rural development, the private sector has increased its involvement considerably. There are also numerous producers' organisations, some of which are organised into economic interest networks (GIC), unions, federations, cooperatives and inter-professional organisations. The producers' organisations are the Confédération Nationale des producteurs de Coton du Cameroun (CNPCC, National Cameroon Confederation of Cotton Producers), to which SODECOTON (the national producer of cotton) is gradually transferring its producer organisation management functions, notably the input credits, the Union des coopératives de café-cacao de l'Ouest (UCCAO, Coffee-Cocoa Western Cooperatives Union), the North West Cooperative Association (NWCA), and the South West Farmers' Cooperative Association (SOWEFCO). The main inter-professional organisations are: the Groupement de la Filière Bois du Cameroun (GFBC, Cameroon Timber Industry Group), the Conseil Interprofessionnel du Cacao et du Café (CICC, Cocoa and Coffee Inter- professional Council), the Réseau des Opérateurs des Filières Horticoles du Cameroun (RHORTICAM, Cameroon Network of Horticulture Industry Operators), and the Poultry Producers' Association (IPAVIC).

Two organisations represent and defend the interests of producers: the Cameroon National Platform of Agricultural, Forestry, and Pastoral Professional Organizations (PLANOPAC) and the Concertation Nationale des Organisations des Producteurs du Cameroun (CNOPCAM, Cameroon National Council of Producers' Organizations). A significant number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and associations are playing an increasingly important role in rural affairs. Lastly, the Chamber of Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock, and Forests (CAPEF), after a period of dormancy, is in full renewal after the revitalization of its governing bodies and new strategic directions. It is designed to provide rural entrepreneurs with a form of representation, a means of expression and an instrument for participation, the loss of which has long been a factor in their isolation and marginalisation. A formalised structure for rural development cooperation between the government and DPs has not yet been established. However, the TFPs have two forums for dialogue: the Groupe Agriculture Elevage (Agriculture Livestock Group) and the Groupe Forêt et Environnement (Forest and Environment Group).

Rural Sector Development Support Measures

In the most recent budget (2010 to 2020), the government legislated a reduction of VAT on the purchase of pesticides, fertilisers, and inputs, as well as equipment and materials for agriculture, livestock and fisheries. It equally exempted registration fees for transfers of land used for agriculture, livestock and fisheries and equally exempted registration fees for loan agreements intended to finance agricultural, livestock and fisheries activities. Finally, farmers and agriculture companies are exempt from paying property tax on properties belonging to agricultural, livestock and fisheries enterprises and intended for these activities. These policies sought to reduce costs, encourage formalisation and reinforce production over.

Between 2015 - 2020, the government's push to develop the rural area took a more prominent role in its budget. The rehabilitation of sinister zones included the exoneration from registration fees, value-added tax on goods and services, property and land registrations and contributions linked to social security and employee's income tax (Finance law 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020). However, benefiting from these was limited to companies who create 10 jobs and source 80% of their inputs locally (Arti. 121, 2; Finance law 2016)

Regarding the agricultural sector, land and property tax, taxes and social security contributions have been pursued as the main policy from the government to support and boost the agriculture sector in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, policy from 2010 has sought to emphasise the importance of innovation. In this regard, buildings used for research and development purposes are excluded from any charges and taxes. Secondly, expenses linked to salaries of researchers and consultants are exempt and all research-related expenses are exempt from taxation. Furthermore, loans and credit that are obtained to facilitate research are capped at 15% or CFA 50 million to support investment in research and development. Equipment in agriculture, aquaculture and animal rearing are equally exempt from taxes in the first three years of operation (Kouam, 2024).

Recent developments in road infrastructure to support the agriculture sector

The Government implemented many cross-cutting actions in 2019, which include (i) the rehabilitation of 168 kilometres of farm-to-market roads and the creation of new roads estimated at 202 kilometres of farm-to-market roads; (ii) the improvement of plots damaged by grazing activities in the North West region; (iii) the purchase of shelling and hulling machines as well as mats for the construction and supply of driers; (iv) the equipping of youths with light farming equipment's such as wheelbarrows, sprayers, overalls; (v) a FCFA 2.4 billion financial support to 590 producer organisations; (vi) the construction of 191 water points and boreholes, 36 community buildings and markets sheds; (vii) the training of relevant actors in fertiliser and soil analysis, and production techniques; and (viii) the creation of a soya bean seed production training farm in Figuil. Furthermore, the 2019 budget, government agricultural policy focused explicitly on the development of value chains resulting in the implementation of several actions to (i) improvement production techniques; (ii) modernise infrastructure; (iii) supervise and train producers; (iv) sustainably manage forest resources; and (v) research and innovation. The next section will look at specific actions in both the industrial and exports sector and the food crop cultivation. From 2019, the government began designing specific quantifiable policies that will support specific food and cash crops in Cameroon. In the paragraphs below, we provide an outline of recent policies in the agriculture sector.

Cocoa Policy between 2019 - 2020

The Decision No. 26/MINADER/CAB of 17 February 2020 merged five ongoing projects into the "Cocoa Development Support Project". The project comprises four components, namely: (i) Improvement of access to selected cocoa seedlings by producers; (ii) Development of modern plantations; (iii) Improvement of the quality of raw materials and development of processing and marketing; and (iv) Support for the structuring of producer organisations.

The government's action to improve the cocoa sector centred around improving productivity via (i) the distribution of 2 189 439 certified cocoa seedlings; (ii) the certification of 1 129 000 seedlings from private nurseries; (iii) the distribution of 12,180 litres of special cocoa fertilisers to farmers; (iv) the treatment of 20,500 hectares of cocoa plantations; (v) the creation of 160 ha of plantations; (vi) the distribution of 10,000 cocoa pods to producers; and (vii) the procurement and distribution of 480 shelling machines to farmers. In order to increase production, the government distributed 1, 750, 940 certified coffee seedlings, 11, 650 litres of special coffee fertilisers and rehabilitated 500 hectares of old plantations.

Natural Rubber Policy between 2019 - 2020

To increase production, the Sud Cameroun Hévéa (SUDCAM) agro-industrial company signed a partnership with the government. This agreement seeks to develop rubber cultivation on 45 hectares in the South Region, which will be planted by 2027, especially in Meyomessala, Meyomessi and Djoum. This policy aims to boost exports and reinforce production to lessen the pressure on government subsidies.

Cotton Policy between 2019 - 2020

SODECOTON maintained its investment plan. To that end, it was granted 64.3 billion in a loan by the International Islamic Trade and Finance Corporation, a subsidiary of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) (MINEPAT, 2023b). As an important component of the fashion and textile value chain, the government hopes to meet domestic demand and reduce the import of second-hand clothes over time.

Export Banana Policy between 2019 - 2020

The Government and the European Union signed a 31.7 billion CFA loan agreement for a 7-year period, starting from 2012, was extended by 2 years. This is designed to support the enterprise sector. The extension will help enterprises in the subsector to complete their various implementation plans (Eco Finance, 2020).

Crude palm Oil Policy between 2019 - 2020

To support operators with the local processing of this crop, the government grants VAT-free imports of crude palm oil at the CEMAC external tariff rate of 5% (Finance law, 2019 & 2020). In 2019, it supported 90,000 tonnes of crude palm oil. Village production was increased by providing farmers with 43,500 pre-germinated nuts and 34,643 seedlings.

Food crop cultivation

Millet/Sorghum:238 tonnes of certified basic seeds were distributed to farmers to improve productivity.

Paddy rice: SEMRY, the major company in the subsector, received a 3.3 billion grant from the Government to procure ploughing machines and electric power generators for the functioning of hulling units, designed to boost production. The Government's actions tended to focus on the distribution of 1,681 tonnes of certified rice seeds, 80 tonnes of irrigated basic rice seeds, the development of 13,102 hectares of lowland and training 400 farmers in rain-fed rice cultivation techniques.

Market garden produce, fruits and vegetables: Concerning other market garden crops, fruits and vegetables, production tended to rise for tomato (+2%), watermelon (+5.7%), pineapple (1.4%), onion (2%), okra (6.5%) and pepper (5.8%). Government's actions concerned the distribution of 36,400 fruit seedlings, 7,000 mango seedlings, 40,000 citrus seedlings and 150,000 eru seedlings Erudef, 2021). The government equally created 10 tomato cultivation training farms in the East and West regions and the distributions of 251 sachets of hybrid watermelon seeds, 440 sachets of hybrid pepper seeds and 225 sachets of high yield tomato seeds.

Conclusion

Between 1894 - 1960, agriculture was linked to politics and indigenous food production was discouraged to promote large plantations, supported by forced and cheap labour. During this period, the French developed several institutions such as the Secteur de Modernisation (SEM) to support and improve the technical capacity of farmers, the Fond d'investissement pour le developpement economique to finance agriculture and specialist institutions in cotton, cocoa and coffee and palm oil - Compagnie Française pour le développement des fibres et textiles (CFDT), institut des fruits et agronomes (IFAC) and Institut de recherches sur les huiles et Oligeneux.

In 1964, after independence, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Animation (DARA) was created under the Federal Ministry of Planning to coordinate agricultural development in both states. This was followed by the first enactment of the first five-year development plan from 1961 - 1965 and a second round from 1966 - 1970, which included the creation of 14 more parastatals, bringing the total to 24 parastatals (MINEPAT, 2003; MINEPAT, 2009). The previous mismanagement of government-managed institutions caused the liquidation of the Food Crop Development Authority (MIDEVIV) and the National Produce Marketing Board (ONCPB). Liquidations continued with the Cameroonian Agricultural Bank in 1997. The 1990's saw the launch of the National Agricultural Extension and Research Program (NPARV) was launched in 1990 through MINAGRI - then Ministry of Agriculture - under the financial assistance of the World Bank, supporting agricultural extension services ranging from input to marketing. During this period, fiscal reforms and the structural adjustment programs lowered government spending in the sector, with multilateral partners and international organisations plugging the fall in government spending.

In 1994, the new forestry law (Law No. 94-01) and the New Agricultural Policy (1990–1998) focused on consolidating achievements in both self-sufficiency and export income and the significant improvement of performance in the sector and the environment. Liberalisation of the economy caused inputs to be negotiated independently with suppliers, impacting smallholders significantly and distorting the market.

The 2000 - 2010 period focused on the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF), with the drafting of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Rural Sector Development Strategy Document (DSDSR) in 2003, which established the framework for all of the sector's development action plans (MINADER – MINEPIA, 2009).

Meanwhile, the World Bank financed National Program for Food Security (NPFS) (2008−2015) was drawn up in 2007 to combat hunger and food insecurity and cut malnourishment by half, especially among the vulnerable households in rural and peri-urban areas, by 2015 (World Bank, 2023). Most policies focused on direct support to existing policies, but did not emphasise indigenous and local institutions that could support creativity. At the turn of the new century between 2000 to 2007 the African Development Bank financed the creation of the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD) whose main focus was on capacity building in the agriculture sector. This sought to complement the World-Bank financed project - National Program for Food Security (NPFS) (2008−2015). Other initiatives aimed at increasing agricultural production, such as the Roots and Tubers Market-Driven Development Program (PNDT-2004-2012), Rural Microfinance Development Support Project (PADMIR-2010-2016), the Commodity Value Chain Development Support Project (PADFA-2010-2018), and ardent donors such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) sprung up.

From 2010 - 2020, agriculture policy took a turn and became institutionally driven, underpinned by bilateral cooperation by France (SCAC/AFD), Netherlands (SNV), Spain (AECID), Canada (CIDA), Germany (KfW, GIZ), USA (USAID), Japan (JICA), South Korea (KOICA). Partnerships extended to producers' organisations, civil organisations, development partners, and the business sector to support the implementation of the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper through the National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA) (Ndjidda et al, 2022).

The government signed, in July 2013, the CAADP Pact (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program) with the various stakeholders involved (the African Union, the ECCAS) to that effect. This was followed by a devolution of powers to local communities, driven by the Decrees 2010/0242/PM and 2010/0244/PM of February 26, 2010, relating to the promotion of agricultural production and rural development activities and the promotion of pastoral and fishing production activities were transferred to municipalities. During this period, the private sector became increasingly involved in supporting and advising government on credible policies to adopt, designed to provide rural entrepreneurs with a form of representation, a means of expression and an instrument for participation, the loss of which has long been a factor in their isolation and marginalisation.

More recently, the government merged several projects into one and has focused on the development of modern plantations, improvement of the quality of raw materials and development of processing and marketing while supporting the structuring of producer organisations such as SEMRY. Furthermore, recent agriculture policy over the last decade has gained significant importance in the budget (Finance Law), by providing tax incentives to support the purchase of inputs and materials, innovation, land and property acquisition and employment. This has become a recurring feature of budgets, designed to improve production and reduce the impact of short-term cyclical shocks on both farmers and agricultural output. This is supported by the distribution of seedlings to provide further support to small holders and farmers in the informal sector. Agriculture policy has, therefore, become more balanced, moving away from the focus on cash crops to food crops to improve domestic agricultural capacity and meet local needs.

Chapter II: Agriculture Sector Financing and Investment

Funding in agriculture has changed over the last two decades, away from multilateral support and grants to loans and direct investment from the Cameroonian budget. In the last decade, the budget has played an increasingly important role in supporting agricultural policy. The financing of agriculture policy in Cameroon is driven by ministries and relevant agencies such as the Institute for Research and Agricultural Development (IRAD). In this chapter, we look at agriculture funding where data is available, and provide a comprehensive overview of earlier funding from 2006 - 2012 using data from respective ministries. Due to the unavailability of data for some years, the report leverages a mix of quantitative data and other media such as TV, media and radio interviews to provide a comprehensive account of financing in the agriculture sector.

Agriculture Financing has been Focused on the Budget

The budget allocation-based ratio of agriculture spending hovered around 4% between 2004-08 and then increased to 5.8% in 2010 before declining to 5% in 2011 and 2012. Verification-based agriculture spending represents 3.2% of total budget expenditure in 2012. For capital expenditure, the share of public investment for three ministries (MINADER, MINEPIA, MINFOF) grew considerably to reach 10% in 2011, versus 4% in 2006. By 2023, the budget for the Ministry of Finance comprised 1.05% of the general budget and 17% of the budget sector, bringing the total allocation to FCFA 65.9 billion (Présidence de la République, 2023).

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Decentralisation and local development - responsible for a portion of agriculture expenditure - saw its budget reach FCFA 51.1 billion or 13.4% of the budget sector and 0.81% of the general budget. Finally, the Ministry of Economy, Planning and regional development reached FCFA 64.2 billion or 1.2% of the general budget (ibid). The government of Cameroon took a more decentralised approach to ensure that the benefits of agriculture policy were felt across larger parts of society, whilst ensuring it credibly contributed to economic growth. In the budget, the government leveraged the Ministry of Economy to equally ensure greater alignment with the Ministry of Finance, whose responsibility for doling out financing usually comes with a requirement to ensure regular reporting of statistics.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development had a budget of CFA 117 billion or 60.3% of the budget sector and 1.86% of the general budget. Meanwhile, the Ministry of livestock, fisheries and Animal Industries reached FCFA 51.3 billion or 26.5% of the budget sector and 0.82% of the general budget. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection reached FCFA 6.7 billion or 3.5% of the budget sector and 0.11% of the general budget. Finally, the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife sector's 2023 budget was FCFA 19 billion or 9.8% of the budget sector and 0.3% of the general budget (MINFI, 2023).

Table 1: Budget for Institutions of ministries

Institution or Ministries	Amount (in billion CFAF)	Percentage (in %)	
		budget sector	General budget
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	117,0	60,3	1,86
Ministry of livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries	51,3	26,5	0,82
Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection	6,7	3,5	0,11
Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife	19,0	9,8	0,30
Total	**194,1**	**100**	**3,09**

For capital expenditure the total investment budget for three ministries has grown substantially over the years reaching 10% in 2011 versus 4% in 2006. In contrast, the operating expenditure of said three ministries (MINADER, MINEPIA, MINFOF) and the subsidies are estimated to account for a very small part of the budget, which is 4% in 2012 - based on budget allocations and even on payments of orders (3.2% in 2012) (Ukpe et al, 2019).

Lastly, the modest agricultural expenditure by the ministries of planning, trade and research reached roughly FCFA 1 billion in 2008 and recommendations at the time was that this needed to be added. This meagre portion of operating expenditure tends to reflect a small share that is taken by the operating capital and capital expenditures of the three ministries plus the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (IRAD). i.e. 5% of the total allocation and 3.2% on a verified basis.

As a proportion of the primary sector GDP, the 2003 - 2011 budget for the three ministries plus IRAD as well as subsidies to public corporations in the agriculture sector grew from 4.3% to 4.5% of primary sector GDP (Ukpe et al, 2019). Regarding the public capital budget, budget allocations in absolute terms grew very sharply between 2008 - 2012 for MINADER (CFA 28 - 40 billion or 2.6% - 3.3.% of GDP). For MINEPIA, this grew from FCFA 7.8 billion to CFAF 10.5 billion equivalent to 1% of GDP and from 3 to FCFA 10.5 billion in 2011 before a decline in 2012 (Ifad, 2019). While MINADER benefited from significant increases in external funding (50%), external funding earmarked for the other two ministries remained static for both MINEPIA and declined for MINFOF.

The impact of the increase in capital expenditure on production in the agricultural sector was limited based on national accounts data. For example, the subsistence agriculture sub sector grew by 4.3% between 2009 - 2012, higher than the 2005-2008 period (MINEPAT-DGE, 2013). By contrast, good results were equally achieved in commercial and export sectors for crops like rice, potatoes, maize, soya, onions, palm oil, and ground nuts. The primary subsector that underperformed were livestock production and fisheries.

Economic Composition of Expenditure.

Between 2009 - 2012, scheduled operating expenditure for both MINADER, MINEPIA, and MINFOF rose insignificantly in spite of a strong growth in capital expenditure and its share of total operating and capital expenditure equally dropped from 86% and 48% for MINADER, 85% to 60% for MINEPIA and 90 to 70% for MINFOF (MINADER, 2010). However, it must be recognised that capital projects contain an operating expenditure component that is estimated at 20% of the total, thereby increasing operating expenses. A closer look at operating expenses during the period show that the share of salaries and wages grew from 2009 and between 2010-2012 was 80% - 90% of the total for MINADER and MINEPIA, while slightly lower for MINFOF (MINADER, 2011).

At MINADER, 94% of its workforce is deployed in various regions. The ratio of ministry agents to agriculture workers (number of agents per 1,000 producers) varies from 4 in the Littoral Region to 0.2 in the Far North. However, the statistics from the North and Far North reveal that farmers get support from two agencies - namely SEMRY (Society for the Expansion and

Modernization of Rice Cultivation in Yagoua) for rice, and SODECOTON (Cotton Development Company) for cotton (MINEPAT/GIZ, 2013).

A budget-allocation based examination of public investment reveal that growth as stronger between 2008 and 2012 for MINADER (from 28 to 40 billion CFA francs, or 2.6 to 3.3% of GDP), for MINEPIA (from 7.8 to 10.5 billion, equal to 1% of GDP), and for MINFOF (an increase from 3 to 9 billion in 2011, followed by a drop in 2012). While MINADER benefited from a strong increase in external resources (50%), the external resources for the two other ministries were unchanged (MINEPIA) or declined (MINFOF) (MINEPAT, 2010).

According to the findings of a report from MINEPAT-GIZ –PAEDP (2011), the implementation rate of expenditure rose (when calculated a verification/allocation ratio) reflecting various efforts to start budget implementation in the first few months of the year. Expenditure commitments are contingent on sector ministries and calls for tender in January and February as well as approval by the MINEPAT and the Ministry of Public Contracts. Thus, the commitment rate for MINADER compared to allocations was 98% in 2011. For MINEPIA , these rates rose rapidly over the past few years, peaking at 86% in 2011, before declining in 2012. For MINFOF, the commitment and verification rates were higher in 2011 and 2012 after being very low for 2005 to 2009, when the first environment sector program began. Payroll share of operating expenses grew after 2009 and from 2010 - 2012, where it accounted for 80% to 90% of total operating expenses for both MINADER and MINEPIA, while slightly less for MINFOF. At the same time, the purchase of goods and services as well as transfers as a proportion of total expenditure fell for all three ministries after 2009. If expenditures are corrected for 20% of the project costs incorrectly classed as investment, the share of payroll in operating expenses in 2012 could fall by 16% for MINADER, 9% for MINEPIA and 6% for MINFOF.

Functional Composition of Expenditure. Based on project expenditure journals, functional composition of expenditure, per activity sector and per crop assistance, can be analysed relative to investment expenditure. Project journals are an important source of information useful for breaking down expenditure into broad categories ranging from food crops, cash crops, capacity building and transversal projects. A review of MINADER project journals show that an increase in allocation for all main groups from 2007 - 2012 during which the total budgeted funds appropriated for MINADER rose by 50%. The share of rice relative to total allocation dropped in absolute terms (MINADER, 2010).

The other crops such as palm oil, plantain, potatoes and tubers increased in absolute terms from 2009 to 2010 due to project disbursements. Transversal projects, capacity building projects and regional projects as well as the construction of administrative facilities absorbed 50% of total allocated resources. Food and cash crops absorbed 39% of resources, 5% for veterinary services and livestock, 3.3% for fisheries, 22% for transversal actions, 8.4% for regional operations, 12% for capacity-building and 6% for extension (MINEPIA, 2018). Data from project journals are not sufficient to find similar data for the years 2012 - 2022 and it would be useful to have more detailed data on operating expenses per function and on a more regular basis.

Data in projects and the implementation reports enable the breakdown of allocations and would be useful for setting up systems for monitoring expenditure per project, per operation and per region. It would be useful to have access to more detailed data on functional expenditures and core functions such as infrastructure, extension services and training. The sharp growth in capital expenditure in the agricultural sector since 2008 - 2009 in terms of commitment and allocations have yet to show tangible positive results in terms of value-added growth for the period 2009 - 2012. In fact, growth in subsistence farming for the period 2009 - 2012 amounted to 4.3%, which was a drop in comparison to the previous years for 2005 - 2008 (MINEPAT/GIZ, 2014). By contrast, good results were achieved in the commercial and export sector (5.5% on average). The sub sectors that underperformed in the primary sector were animal husbandry and hunting (2.6%), and fisheries (2.2%), lagging behind population growth (3%).

The effect of higher capital spending since 2006 shows a correlation between public expenditure and increased expenditure. This correlation is less strong for cocoa production, which tends to decline in spite of higher spending. This is due to the fact that cocoa and coffee production are more decentralised, dominated by small producers, which requires more active policies to generate tangible results in production.

A review of MINADER project journals show that allocations for all main crops increased between 2007 - 2012, where budgets for MINADER rose by an estimated 50%. During this period, the share of rice production fell relative to other crops, even though its allocations increased in absolute terms. Other crops such as palm oil, plantain, potato and tubers showed an increase in absolute terms from 2009 - 2010 due to some project disbursements. Transversal projects, regional projects and capacity building projects and the construction of administrative facilities absorbed 505 of allocated resources. Meanwhile, food and cash crops absorbed 39% of resources, veterinary services and livestock absorbed 5%, 3% for fisheries, 22% for transversal actions and 8.4% for funding construction and 22% for capacity building and 6% for extension (MINFOF, 2013). Data from project journals as well as PIB implementation reports are used to evaluate the breakdown to create mechanisms to monitor project expenditure such as sector support, basic infrastructure, training, extension and research. However, this is limited to 2006 - 2011 and recent data is lacking as our request to the Ministry of Agriculture was met with no replies. It would also be useful to have more detailed data of operating expenses per main function for infrastructure, extension and training.

Regional Allocation of Expenditure.

For the period 2006–2011, regional distributions varied between 3% (for the East Region) and 19% (for the North-West Region). This analysis reveals a bias in favour of the North-West region with a minimum allocation of 19% of the investment budget even though its food production and production were 7% and 12% respectively, while the incidence of poverty is only 51% compared to the Far North (65.9%), North (63.7%), Adamawa (53%) (World Bank, 2014). The West and South West regions received allocations which exceeded their contributions to food production. However, the East and South benefitted less with 2.6% and 1.3%, less than the share of their rural population (ibid).

Agricultural Research: Agricultural research that is generally undertaken by IRAD has suffered from inadequate financing to the lack of human resources after a large number of competent researchers retired. The completion of certain products such as the National Agricultural Extension and Research Program (PNVRA) ended in 2007 due to restricted resources. This was equally offset by State subsidies after 2007 and by the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries), especially funding for basic seed production. The development of new varieties of cotton, coffee/cocoa, and maize were priority crops of IRAD, which enjoy a reputation of excellence. We find a heavy bias for the North-West region with an average allocation of 19% of PIB funds, whereas its regional share of domestic crop production and rural population were 7% and 12%, respectively. Furthermore, the incidence of poverty in the region was 51%, below that of the poorest regions (Far North 65.9%, North 63.7%, Adamawa: 53%) (IRAD 2008 - 2016).

Additionally, the West and South-West Regions with 13% and 15% of allocations received contributions that exceeded domestic crop production of 10% and 7% respectively. Meanwhile, their share of the rural population was 11% and 8%, respectively. The North region received 12% of allocations in line with its share of the population of 14%, higher than its domestic crop production of 4%.

At the opposite end, the Far North region accounted for 27% of the country's population, with a poverty rate of 65.9% and contributing 10% to domestic crop production received only 15% of the allocations. This region that accounts for the falls within Sahel Remains vulnerable to a range of problems that include food insecurity, attacks from seed eating birds and locusts that destroy crops through pachyderm desertification as well as recurring floods that are related to climate change. The East and South regions receive allocations estimated at 2.6% and 1.3%, respectively, which fell short of their contributions to the country's crop productions and rural populations. The Centre region that accounts for 12% of the allocations was in line with its rural population of 10% but contributed to the national crop production of 21% (MINADER, 2010). The Adamawa region with 3% of the allocation received budget resources that were in line with a contribution of 4% crop production, but lower than its share of the country's rural population.

The overall picture shows unfairness in regional distribution in resources as regions with the highest rates of poverty receive the least resources, which hampers attempts to lower the incidence of poverty.

This assessment is shared by MINEPAT (2003 - 2012) in its report on the Millennium Development Goals published in 2012, indicating that the MDG aims to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2020. Meanwhile, INS data (ECAM II and III) show that rural poverty increased between 2001 to 2007, rising from 52.1% to 55%. The most affected regions were the Far North (rising to 65.9% from 56.3%), North (63.7% from 50.1%), Adamawa (53% from 48.8%), and East (rising to 50.4% to 44%). The only regions that experienced a decline in rural poverty were the Centre region where poverty fell from 48.2% to 41.2%), Littoral (from 35.5% to 31.1%), West (from 40.3% to 28.9%), North-West (from 52.5% to 51%), South (from 31.5% to 29.3%) and the South West region (from 33.8% to 27.5%).

Feeder Roads.

To streamline its operations, the government adopted a policy in 1990's based on (i) privatisation of maintenance operations, restricted to SMEs (Small and Medium-Size Enterprises) and private road engineering consulting firms; (ii) refocusing MINTP (Ministry of Public Works) onto planning, programming and coordination activities, and on policy evaluation; (iii) tasking MINADER with formulating strategies to expand production; (iv) the road maintenance fund will be responsible for maintenance. Since 2007, the annual budget for maintenance and rehabilitation of feeder roads stayed between 32 and 35 billion CFA francs (MINEPAT, 2012). These expenses are significantly below those of MINTP's medium-term expenditure framework and by 2012 the gap widened to 30%. This suggests that budget allocations are inadequate for the needs currently assessed.

The Road fund pays for routine maintenance works and is overseen by MINTP, which invites tenders and signs contracts with successful private bidders. In addition to such private companies, MINTP contracts public administrative bodies such as SODECOTON, SODECAO, MIDENO while foreign companies are contracted for feeder roads. In 2011 and 2012, these contracts covered 8,500 and 10,500 km, respectively, which is only 42.5% to 52.5% of the total of 20,000 km of feeder roads (INS, 2011-2012). Strengthening the feeder road networks require large budget allocations although there is a lack of consensus on how much needs to be spent.

Agriculture Financing Over the last Decade

2016 - 2017: The Finance law for 2016 and 2017 had similar budget lines for the agriculture sector and funding spanned agriculture products to aquaculture and animal rearing (Finance Law, 2016 & Finance Law 2017). In 2016, companies who operate in disadvantaged and economically-excluded areas were exonerated from taxes on land titles and property, social security contributions and the purchase of goods and services linked to the agriculture sector (Art. 121) but were required to employ at least 10 people and had to source 80% of their input locally. New investments in agriculture were equally excluded from taxes. Companies in the agriculture, aquaculture and fish sector were equally excluded from registration fees, property and land title tax as well as the purchase of inputs such as pesticides, farming and irrigation equipment. Investments in innovation were tax deductible at 15%, up to FCFA 50 million (Art. 124). In the 2016 finance law, the budget for agriculture was FCFA 110 billion, before rising to

FCFA 111.3 billion in 2017. Meanwhile, the budget for animal rearing and fishing was estimated at FCFA 39.1 billion in 2016, before falling to FCFA 31 billion in 2017. Finally, as land management became an integral feature of agricultural sustainability, the budget rose from FCFA 7.5 billion in 2016 to FCFA 9.2 billion in 2017.

The ministry of agriculture and rural development's budget was separated into four main funding themes. The budget for modernising infrastructure and rural & production was unchanged at FCFA 20.9 billion in both 2016 - 2017. It sought to improve the performance of factors of production in rural areas and increase the contribution of the rural area to overall production.

The sustainable management of resources linked to agriculture sought to improve sustainable land use and respect environmental constraints was financed at FCFA 3.4 billion in both years. The improvement of agricultural competitiveness was allocated FCFA 67. 4 billion in both 2016 - 2017. The government allocated FCFA 19.6 billion in both 2016 - 2017 to support institutional governance and facilitate coordination of services and ensure the effective implementation of MINADER programs.

Table 2: Summary of Expenses at Ministry of Agriculture

Indicator	2016 (FCFA, Millions)	2017 (FCFA, Millions)
MINADER (Modernising infrastructure and rural production)	20, 957,260	20, 957, 260
MINADER (Sustainable Management of agriculture natural resources)	3, 351,370	3, 351, 370
MINADER (Improvement of productivity and competitiveness of agricultural products)	3, 351, 370	3, 351, 370
MINADER (Governance and institutional support in the agricultural sector and rural development)	19,639,355	19,639,355

Source: Finance Law (2016 & 2017)

The ministry for animal rearing, fishing and animal industry allocated FCFA 17 billion in both years to boost production and animal feed, by increasing the number of products originating and transformed from animal products - through the development of production and animal industry (Code No. 406). The sanitation cover and the fight against Zoonoses was allocated FCFA 3.6 billion and sought to reduce the impact of animal diseases on productivity and improve the quality of sanitation on animal and sea products. While the government set a metric to measure its effectiveness, this was not reported in subsequent years.

Meanwhile, governance and institutional support for the aquaculture and animal rearing sector was FCFA 7 billion and sought to improve the coordination of services and assure the correct implementation of the programmes from MINEPIA. The rate of execution of government projects has not been shared - at time of writing - underscoring the need for the government to report on the results of its key performance indicators. The development of fishing products was estimated at FCFA 3.2 billion and sought to assure and boost production of fish-products and improve their quantity over time.

Table 3: Summary of Expenses from Ministry of Fishing

Indicator (Ministere de l'elevage, des pêches et de l'industrie animale) - MINEPI	2016	2017
Development of production and animal industry (MINEPI)	FCFA 17,109,674	FCFA 17,109,674
Improvement of coverage and fight against Zoonoses. (MINEPI)	FCFA 3,627,461	FCFA 3,627,461
Governance and institutional support for the subsector of animal rearing and fishing industries (MINEPI)	FCFA 7,104,955	FCFA 7,104,955
Development of fish production (MINEPI)	FCFA 3,243,738	FCFA 3,243,738

Source: Finance Law (2016 & 2017)

In order to support the effective running of ministries, the government authorised the repayment of credits estimated at FCFA 111 million in 2016 - 2017 for agriculture and rural development and FCFA 31.1 million for animal rearing and fishing (Art. 26, Finance Law 2016). More importantly, Article 29, which states that all executions of the budget should adhere and facilitate the implementation of structural reforms with international multilateral partners.

2018 - 2019: The budget for the Ministry of agriculture and rural development was estimated at 86.6 million in 2018 before falling to 84.9 million in 2019. Animal rearing, fishing and animal industries were allocated FCFA 35.9 million in 2019 and FCFA 32.3 million in 2019. The breakdown for MINADER is as follows; modernising rural infrastructure and production was allocated FCFA 21.6 million in 2019 and 2020. This sought to improve the performance of factors of production and improve the quality of rural life. The key performance indicator was the number of tractors per 1000 hectares and the volume of funds injected into small and medium sized farms.

Table 4: Summary of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Expenses

MINADER	2018	2019
Modernising infrastructure in the rural sector and production	FCFA 21.6 billion	FCFA 21.6 billion
Sustainable management of natural agricultural resources	FCFA 1.9 billion	FCFA 1.9 billion
MINADER (Improvement of productivity and competitiveness of agricultural products)	FCFA 35.9 billion	FCFA 35.9 billion
MINADER (Governance and institutional support in the agricultural sector and rural development)	FCFA 24.9 billion	FCFA 24.9 billion

Source: Finance Law (2018 & 2019)

Secondly, the sustainable management of agriculture resources was allocated FCFA 1.9 million in 2019 and 2020 to improve sustainable exploitation of agricultural land and respected environmental constraints. This will be gauged by the metric of land that utilised fertiliser that respects environmental constraints. In order to improve the competitiveness of Cameroonian products and ensure farmers gain greater market share in regional and international markets, the government allocated FCFA 35.9 million in both years.

Crop yield was the key performance indicator, but the unavailability of data remains a key constraint. Finally, governance and institutional support in the sub-sector and rural development was allocated FCFA 29.9 million in both years to improve the coordination of services and the execution of programs from MINADER. The execution rate of activities was the main key performance indicator.

Table 5: Summary of Ministry Expenses 2019 - 2020

Ministry of animal rearing, fishing and animal industries MINEPI	2019	2020
Development of production and animal industry	FCFA 15.1 billion	FCFA 15.1 billion
Improvement of sanitation cover and the fight against zoonotic diseases	FCFA 5.1 billion	FCFA 5.1 billion
Governance and institutional support in the sub-sector, animal rearing, fishing and animal industry	FCFA 9.2 billion	FCFA 9.2 billion
Development of fish farming	FCFA 2.9 billion	FCFA 2.9 billion

Source: Finance Law (2019 & 2020)

The development of production and animal industry are designed to boost production in products originating from animals, with an allocation of FCFA 15.1 billion. The improvement of sanitation cover and the fight against zoonotic diseases, at FCFA 5.1 billion in both years, sought to reduce the effect of zoonotic diseases on animal productivity and fish production. In order to coordinate the production services and assure a good execution of programmes from MINEPIA, the government allocated FCFA 9.2 billion in both years.

2020 - 2021: In 200- 2021 in a context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the budget for MINADER was FCFA 86.9 billion in both 2020 and 2021. The largest portion of the budget was spent on improving environmental infrastructure and access to factors of production - FCFA 45.6 billion in both years. This was designed to increase vegetable production by 10% annually by 2025. An allocation of FCFA 15.2 billion was allocated to improving productivity of the agricultural sector. The yields per year are the main key performance indicator for this allocation.

A total of FCFA 12.8 billion were used to reinforce the resilience of systems of production and food security and the nutritional content for rural populations.

This was designed to improve the capacity of actors to adapt to climate change. A total of FCFA 10.4 billion was used for governance and institutional support as well as the sub-sector and rural development. This was designed to improve coordination of services and ensure the good execution of programs.

Table 6: Governance and Productivity Expenses in MINADER

Indicator (Ministère de L'elevage, des Pêches et de Industrie Animale) - MINADER	2020	2021
MINADER - Governance and institutional support for the sub sector of animal rearing and fishing industries	FCFA 10.4 billion	FCFA 10.4 billion
MINADER (Improvement of productivity and competitiveness of agricultural products)	FCFA 15.2 billion	FCFA 15.2 billion
MINADER - Improvement of environmental infrastructure and access to factors of production	FCFA 48.6 billion	FCFA 48.6 billion
MINADER - Improving the resilience of production systems, food security and the nutritional value of rural populations susceptible to climate change	FCFA 12.8 billion	FCFA 12.8 billion

Source: Finance Law (2019 & 2020)

The fishing industry and aquaculture saw an allocation of FCFA 25.8 billion for the development of infrastructure and animal industry in both 2020 and 2021 to boost production of products originating from animals. Approximately FCFA 4. 9 billion was allocated to improving sanitation and reducing the prevalence of zoonotic diseases. The development of fish farming and governance and institutional support was estimated at FCFA 3.8 billion and FCFA 7.1 billion.

Table 7: Ministry of Animal Rearing and Fishing Expenses 20202 - 2021

Indicator (Ministère de l'elevage, des pêches et de l'industrie animale) - MINEPI	**2020**	**2021**
Development of infrastructure and animal industry	FCFA 25.8 billion	FCFA 25.8 billion
Improvement of sanitation cover of and the fight against zoonotic diseases	FCFA 4. 9 billion	FCFA 4.9 billion
Development of fish farming	FCFA 3.8 billion	FCFA 3.8 billion
Governance and institutional support for the sub-sector, animal rearing, fishing and animal industry	FCFA 7.1 billion	FCFA 7.1 billion

Source: Finance Law (2019 & 2020)

Conclusion:

Over the last decade, agriculture policy is rooted in the government's yearly budget. In 2023, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development budget amounted to FCFA 117 billion or 60.3% of the budget and 1.86% of the general budget. The reduction of VAT on purchases of pesticides, fertilisers and inputs as well as materials for agriculture and fisheries were equally enacted to support the agriculture sector. Furthermore, the exemption from registration fees for transfers of land used for agriculture, livestock and fisheries reached FCFA 194.1 billion, allocated to the development of the rural sector, which includes 60% of the total amount of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development. The finding of the agriculture sector has been centralised at the ministerial level even as there has been additional support from international partner. The Ministry of agriculture and fisheries budget is effectively separated into four sections to improve governance. However, financing is not effective as there are no post-project appraisals to gauge the effective use of financing.

Chapter III: Performance of the Agriculture Sector, Exports and Trade

Introduction

Cameroon experienced a rapid economic expansion during and after the oil boom. From 1973 to 1986, incomes grew by more than 7% and this was supported by unsustainable agriculture and petroleum exports and government borrowing (Benjamin & Devarajan, 1989). Oil revenues rose from zero to 46% of exports between 1972 and 1982 and domestic absorption rose to 103% of GDP driven by high government spending (World Bank 2004). Trade policy was protectionist and the government engaged in a policy of import substitution, supported by restrictive trade policies and fiscal subsidies.

This caused inflation to rise 10% between 1997 and 1985, driven by high prices in non-tradeable and higher real wages followed by an appreciating exchange rate. The resulting deterioration in competitiveness caused a sharp drop in non-oil exports (agriculture and manufactured goods). Meanwhile, imports surged with domestic absorption contributing to the deterioration in trade balance that caused unsustainable levels of indebtedness in the 1980's. The consequences slowly unwound between 1986 - 1993. The country only recovered after currency devaluation in 1994 and structural reforms in the second half of 1990. During the downturn, GDP fell by 5% on average and so did per capita income in 1993 half the levels seen in 1986. Meanwhile, current public spending rose by 11% to 19% of GDP, while investment dropped to 3.5% in 1986. The growth in external debt service requirements drove investment rates.

The economic recovery in 1994 continued through 2005 due to combined efforts of authorities to implement prudential economic policies to improve economic and financial stability. While these conformed with the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), the nominal 50% devaluation helped adjust the economy in 1994. However, the structural constraints of domestic demand and supply caused a muted response to devaluation - its incentives were short-lived (INS, 1997, 2002a).

The non-oil sector spurred an annual average GDP of 5% between 1995-2003, despite problems in the energy sector that inhibited growth and manufacturing. The spike in inflation that followed the CFAF devaluation waned during this period and public finances improved due to prudential policy and tax administration. Non-oil government revenues rose by 4% of GDP, eliminating the budget deficit and generating surpluses from 2000. The external debt ratio fell between 2000 and 2003 from 77% to 44% of GDP. The financial and fiscal recovery in 1995 caused living standards to rise and poverty fell between 1996 - 2001(World Bank 2004), driven by a recovery in the agricultural sector. Agriculture has since recorded remarkable growth but has not caused production per capita to rise back to levels seen after independence.

Meanwhile, Cameroon was a net exporter of agricultural products before the crisis and the 1994 devaluation, which eroded the positive effects of imports that declined and then recovered in 1996 as salaries and exports fell significantly. A further import boom was recorded following the construction of the Chad/Cameroon pipeline in 1998 (Anderson et al, 2008). Exports fell after the reinforcing of the new forestry law forbidding exports of whole logs for most trees. On average, rice and cereal imports rose in the 1990's despite price increases following the devaluation.

Cameroon has been cited as one of the few countries that achieved agricultural development. However, past growth was driven by unsustainable expansion of crops with minimal increases in productivity. The site grew between 1960 - 1970 especially for coffee and groundnuts, but growth slowed significantly with cotton and sorghum growing in 1980's and only roots and tubers in 1990's (Baffes, 2007). Despite significant growth in fertilisers, there was limited growth in yields and Cameroon only did slightly better than most African countries in the late 1960's. These trends in output are influenced by technological change and incomes as well as a shift in domestic supply chains and demand. This was equally driven by pricing decisions and distortions to agricultural incentives that are imposed by policymakers.

Exports and Trade

Cameroon, like Ghana and Mali, tend to benefit from tariff rates below those provided under the WTO's most favoured nation (MFN) principle to most OECD countries (Liapis, 2007). The preferential treatment somewhat mitigates the potential for negative consequences of OECD subsidies. It should be noted that the economic value of preferential tariffs equally depends on the difference between tariffs that are applied to imports from beneficiary countries and those from other countries. Most of Cameroon's agricultural exports enter the European Union, United States, Japan and Canada at zero tariffs.

The OECD has a rate of 0.15% less in all four economies. The preference margin for agricultural products from Cameroon to Canada, Japan or the United States is insignificant. However, the difference is significant in the EU, who is the largest buyer of Cameroon exports, averaging 12% on an import-weighted basis between 2001 - 2003. The total economic benefit of Cameroon's preferential access to agricultural products has been estimated at $46 million (Liapis, 2007), which translates to over 1% of the farming sector's GDP. Cameroon ranks among the top ten countries in economic value in terms of preferential access to the EU agricultural market.

The Role of IRAD and MINADER

Public expenditure in the agriculture sector including IRAD and subsidies in public administration bodies in the sector amounts to 4% of total budget expenditure in the 2004−2008 period and rose to 5% of the total in 2011 and 2012 (Dewbre & Boot de Battisti, 2008). The capital expenditure proportion of the global capital budget for ministries involved in the agriculture sector rose sharply reaching 11% in 2010 versus 4% in 2006. By contrast, operating expenditure that includes subsidies to public administration bodies still make up an insignificant part of the budget (2.9% in 2012) (ibid). The implementation rate for capital expenditure has risen over the past years and there is greater evidence of efficiency and reduced delays in the implementation of projects. However, the sharp increase in public capital expenditure in the agriculture sector since 2008 has produced disappointing results in terms of value-added growth in the primary sector amounting to 4.1% in the 2009−2012 period, versus 4.7% between 2005-2008.

Functional analysis of capital expenditure in the sector based on project journals equally reveal that growth of capital expenditure from 2007 to 2012 benefitted major sub-sectors such as rice, other cereals, coffee/cocoa, and other crops. The sectors that appear to be underfunded are agricultural water supply, infrastructure and increased accessibility to production areas, research, veterinary and fisheries. IRAD provides the primary agricultural research service but saw its resources drop after 2009 when the National Agriculture Extension and Research Program, financed by the World Bank and the ADB, came to an end. Resources dedicated to it over the past few years both in terms of percentage of GDP and per capita are lower than the levels seen in most Sub-Saharan African countries. Feeder roads have not seen substantial investment over the last four years, a comparison between funds itemised in the Ministry of Public Works' MTEF and budget allocations reveal an average gap of 35% over the past three years. Agricultural extension services are critical elements for the authorities' actions to enhance agricultural production. The launching of the ACEFA project with support and advisory structure in pilot regions will gradually be extended to all areas and give rise to the problem of aligning these new structures with already existing structures of the PNVRA.

Management of resources in a decentralised manner presents enormous challenges in terms of efficiency of carrying out expenditure due to weak project management in local implementation capacity and in generating feedback in information. Recent partnerships between MINTP and municipalities and departmental officials in project management are one step in the right direction. Despite improvements in expenditure rates, more needs to be done during the course of the year. The principal budget control in the first part of the year should be made flexible. The introduction of concepts authorising commitments and carrying credits forward will make payment easy over several financial years.

The introduction of the concept of authorising commitments and carrying credits forward will make payments easier over the years and may equally facilitate the procedures and retain expenses until the end of the year to support the budget implementation. Public procurement procedures are a brake absorption on public development aid and budget implementation on internal resources. The excessive costs of tender documents present a major stumbling block for small and medium-sized enterprises and access to documentation should be eased to avoid budget cuts and delays.

Impact on output

Due to the privatization of state-owned enterprises as per the action points of the donor-assisted structural adjustment program that was implemented in the 1990s, the agriculture sector experienced an up-turn. The privatization of previously state-owned enterprises such as SOCAPALM has led to an increase in its production from 57,800 tons to 140,349 tons in 2019 (SOCAPALM, 2021). This has also led to an upward revision of wages and a drop in the cost of palm oil, thanks to economies of scale. Similarly, the value-added from agriculture to

Cameroon's GDP has fallen from 26.5% in 1992 to 17.3% in 2020 (World Bank, 2022). However, in net terms, the value of the agricultural sector has risen from USD 3.18 billion to USD 6.952 billion in the same period. As such, Cameroon's agricultural policies have had an impact on firms productivity but have also increased the volume of exports.

Chapter IV: Programs from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER)

The existence of several projects from MINADER are poorly coordinated. Beyond policy documents such as the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper and the Rural Sector Development Strategy Paper, little steering is in action. Interventions tend to be dispersed or duplicated due to inadequate consultation between administrators and policy makers who must control political pressure and territorial coverage. This is accentuated by the willingness of development partners to project a good image and ensure subsidies for important inputs such as fertilisers and seeds as well as pesticides that do not compromise sustainable development. As such, monitoring and development outcomes should be considered in the sustainable design of agriculture policy. Due to the complexity and nature of projects undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), we have created a table, summarising each policy and the focus area of intervention.

Table 8: Various Programs in Cameroon Over the Last Three Decades

Project/program name	Focus of intervention	Areas of intervention	Other observations
1. National Agricultural Extension and Agricultural Research Program (PNVRA). Target/beneficiaries: • Grassroots Producer Organisations • Associations of Producers	➢ Improved technical assistance for producers ➢ Developing farmers potential for production ➢ Conservation management of natural resources and protection of the environment	Nationwide	First funded by the the World Bank and IFAD and then internal resources (BIP HIPC).

Project/program name	Focus of intervention	Areas of intervention	Other observations
2. Competitiveness of Agricultural Operations Improvement Program (ACEFA). Target/beneficiaries: The EFA members of producer groups, producer groups, and professional agricultural organizations of the second and third levels (CIG unions, Cooperatives, and Cooperative Unions)	➢ Capacity building of secondary and tertiary level professional organisations to improve the services provided to EFA ➢ Financing of producers' productive projects and their ➢ organisations to increase the capacity of family farms ➢ Established an advisory support mechanism co-managed by the state	Northern, Adamawa, South, Southwest, and West Regions	Financed by AFD / C2D resources
3. Grassfield Participatory and Decentralised Development Project (GP-DERUDEP). Target/beneficiaries: Smallholder farmers	➢ Agricultural Development ➢ Capacity building for decentralised MINADER services, municipalities, and agricultural socio-professional organizations in community development ➢ Support for rehabilitating rural roads	North-West Region	Funded by the AfDB
4. Rural Development Project in the Region of Mount Mbappit. Target/beneficiaries: Rural people/farmers	➢ Agricultural and rural infrastructure ➢ Animation / Awareness, training, and support to beneficiaries of agricultural extension ➢ Acquisition of agricultural inputs and equipment; ➢ Management and monitoring/evaluation of the project	Department of Noun, Western Region	Financed by the Islamic Development Bank

Project/program name	Focus of intervention	Areas of intervention	Other observations
5. Rumpi Area Participatory Development Project. Target/beneficiaries: Rural populations in the South West	➢ Capacity building of stakeholders ➢ Improved agricultural production and productivity ➢ Improved market access and support to local development initiatives.	South West regions	Project funded by the AfDB
6. Plantain Sector Re-launch Program (CSRP) Target/beneficiaries: • Individual or organised (CIG) producers of plantains • Individual or organised (CIG) nurseries specialising in of plantain plant production • Small-scale plantain processors • Small plantain traders	➢ Cover the plantain shortfall at national and sub-regional level ➢ Establish a network of professional nurseries ➢ Support for farmers interested in establishing a plantation of 0.5 to 1 ha	Adamawa and seven southern regions of Cameroon	Ongoing HIPC funding
7. National Program for Food Security (NPFS) Target/beneficiaries: • Small farmers and their organisations • Local decentralised authorities • NGO partners	➢ Optimum use of natural resource base ➢ Crop Intensification ➢ Diversification of production systems ➢ Processing and marketing of products ➢ Nutrition ➢ Monitoring, warning and crisis response mechanism	Countrywide	Initial funding FAO and BIP MINADER

Project/program name	Focus of intervention	Areas of intervention	Other observations
8. Grassroots Poverty Reduction Sub-Program (SPRPB) Target/beneficiaries: • Small farmers and their organisations	➢ Training in developing projects ➢ Financial support for the implementation of beneficiaries' eligible micro-projects ➢ Training of producer organisations in project management	Countrywide	UNDP
9. Maize Sector National Support Program (PNAFM) Target/beneficiaries: • Small maize producers and their organisations • Multipliers of improved maize seed varieties • Medium and large maize farms but only in terms of equipment (support for mechanisation)	➢ Training of multipliers of improved maize seed varieties ➢ Support producers' micro-projects ➢ Strengthening producers' capacity ➢ Structuring and organising value chain stakeholders (researchers, seed multipliers, seed conditioners maize producers, input suppliers, traders, transport operators, etc.)	Countrywide	Ongoing HIPC funding

Project/program name	Focus of intervention	Areas of intervention	Other observations
10. Roots and Tubers Development Program Target/beneficiaries: • Farmers • Farmer organisations	➢ Strengthening the capacity of roots and tubers producers ➢ Improve access for producer organisations to local, sub-regional and national marketing circuits for roots and tubers ➢ Sustainable improvement of processors' access to appropriate post-harvest and processing technology ➢ Contribution to the sustainable intensification of roots and tubers production through the use of improved technologies	Far North, Adamawa, and 7 southern regions	Ongoing project financed by IFAD
11. Relaunching rice production in the Logone Valley	➢ Structuring rice producers ➢ Set up a fertilisers revolving fund	SEMRY Area / Far North	HIPC funding
12. The project against the major scourges of food production Target/beneficiaries: • Food producers • Producer organisations • MINADER plant bases	➢ Strengthening producers' organisational capacities (intervention village brigades: phytosanitary advisers, support for equipment and treatment products, training) ➢ Strengthening the operational capacity of the airway treatment unit	Countrywide	HIPC funding
13. Lowland development program Target/beneficiaries: • Producer organisations	➢ Grants to acquire pumps and piping and secondly for site development	Countrywide	HIPC funding

Project/program name	Focus of intervention	Areas of intervention	Other observations
14. Project to support the integration of young farmers Target/beneficiaries: • Young farmers (18-40 years)	➢ Support projects for young farmers. ➢ Setting up young farmers in agricultural development ➢ centres. ➢ Implementing a young farmers agricultural project.	Countrywide	HIPC funding
15. The potato sector project Target/beneficiaries: • Young farmers (18-40 years)	➢ Support for production. ➢ Support for processing and marketing.	Potato ecological zone (West and North West)	HIPC funding
16. Agricultural Value Chain Development Support Program (PADFA) Target/beneficiaries: • Producer companies and organisations	• Rice and onion production • Storage, processing, and marketing of target products. • Strengthening technical and organisational capacity farmers.	Far North, North, West, and North West	Funding for this project was from IFAD from 2011

Source: MINADER (2010 - 2013)

While there have been several MINADER programs over the years, these have had a marginal positive effect on output and there are no verifiable statistics to gauge the impact of these programs on farmers' incomes and agricultural productivity. Due to the nature of the programs that were focused on informal farmers, there is likely a net positive impact on food crops such as cassava, plantain and yams. The majority of said programs were sponsored by international partners such as IFAD and/or took place under the HIPC programs that sought to increase agricultural productivity, training in developing projects, financial support for the implementation of micro-projects and the training of producer organisations in project management.

CHAPTER V: The Role of Parastatals in Agriculture Development

Introduction

Cameroon is an exporter of banana, with exports that grew until 2017, reaching 242,000 tons and 212,000 tons in 2022 (Business in Cameroon, 2017). At this level, Cameroon ranks 15th largest exporter in the world due to a combination of unfavourable weather conditions and security issues in the South West region banana production dropped by more than 50% in 2018. This fall reflects challenges encountered by Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). The country's main banana producer faced challenges that were equally felt by rubber producers, where production dropped by more than 20% in 2017 for the same reasons.

Rice remains one of the most essential food crops. Production is estimated at around 400,000 tons and the country imports about 600,000 tons of which about 200,000 tons were re-exported to neighbouring markets at a premium (FAO, 2023). Rice is important for daily consumption and is subject to price controls. Cassava is another staple food, which saw production increase from 4 million tons in 2011 to 5.3 million tons in 2016. The agricultural sector is dominated by small artisanal exploitations with less productivity and significant state intervention in some sub-sectors. The majority of farmers in Cameroon are smallholders who produce 80% of the country's food crops. Traditional family enterprises produce with limited mechanised processes, with low productivity. Deteriorating production assets, climate hazards and security and the declining availability of inputs have adverse implications for the performance of the sector. But agriculture can emerge as a main driver of growth if the sector transitions from traditional agriculture towards diversified and commercially viable methods.

This chapter looks at state-owned and partially owned state-owned enterprises in the agriculture sector. It provides an overview of production and the operations in SOEs to provide an overview of the production and contribution to the agricultural sector. Specifically, this report looks at the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), SODECOTON, SEMRY and SODECAO.

2009 Policy: Strategic Document for Growth and Labor in 2009

The government adopted the Strategic Document for Growth and Labor in 2009 and a National Plan for Agriculture Development (2014-2020) (MINEPAT, 2009). Investment in agriculture aims at modernising and improving commercial viability set out in its strategic document. The government plans to implement a development program to increase agricultural output to satisfy food needs of the population and develop the agro-industrial sector. Modernising production will consist of; (i) making factors of production including land, water and agricultural inputs accessible and available; (ii) promoting access to technological innovations by reinforcing the research/extension link; and (iii) developing competitiveness in production and value chains.

The Role of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Public Establishments in the Agriculture Sector

Cameroon's parastatal sector is large and diverse, with a total of 82 SOEs, of which 33 are fully state owned and 21 are majority state-owned while 28 operate with state minority shareholding (as of end 2017). Of this, the services sector accounts for 13, followed by oil and gas, transport and banking with 9. Parastatals are equally part of government support to develop the agriculture sector. While the agriculture sector has the largest number of entities with modest revenue. Agricultural parastatals amount to 1.17% of GDP, ranking the agricultural sector third behind manufacturing and utilities in terms of revenue. Between 2014 to 2017, revenues of companies in the agriculture sector dropped by 7%, following the trend across all SOEs.

In the face of declining revenues, most SOEs have received government subsidies to support their operations. The agricultural SOEs received 10% of all SOE financing in 2017 compared to 40% and 42% for transport and tourism (World Bank, 2014). SOEs in agriculture are the second largest loss-making group in SOEs after the manufacturing sector despite being the largest generator of overall revenue. The World Bank's SOE sector diagnostic found that the financial and operational performance of parastatals has been generally poor. Majority-owned SOEs/EPs tend to be loss making, while the majority of mixed-ownership companies are profitable. In addition to being a drag on public finances, these parastatals also pose significant risks and periodically require support from the state to maintain their operations, posing significant fiscal risks. The parastatals sector absorbs 15% of non-oil revenues in transfers and areas between 2014 - 2016 alone.

Corporate governance practices in parastatals are weak and central government oversight tends to be uneven. Currently, most SOEs board and management are staffed by civil servants with little direct business knowledge. SOE oversight and monitoring are fragmented and irregularly weakening accountability. The key recommendations for SOEs include (i) strengthening data availability, SOE reporting, central government monitoring and transparency (ii) strengthening corporate governance of SOEs, including the process for recruitment (iii) normalisation of financial relations between SOEs and the state, including a proper costing and financing of public service obligations (iv) review of existing performance agreements (v) ownership diversification as part of the reform strategy (vi) establishing a clear vision for the SOE sector.

The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC)

CDC is 100% owned by the state and reports to MINADER, producing rubber, bananas and oil palm. It is a major exporter of semi-finished rubber products, palm oil, palm kernel oil and bananas across the sub-region and the world. The corporation ships about 100,000 million tons of bananas annually with 22,000 employees and is only second to the central government in terms of employment (World Bank, 2019). CDC equally provides social services in its production. However, CDC is facing both financial and operational crisis' due to the unrest in the SouthWest region linked to the Anglophone crisis. Around 12,000 employees are currently inactive and do not receive full salaries. CDC has not shipped any bananas since 2018 due to the anglophone crisis.

SODECOTON

SODECOTTON is large and 59% owned by the state with 41% owned by two private companies - GEOCOTON (30%) and Société immobilière d'investissements Cameroun - SMIC (11%). Its main objective is to improve living standards and create jobs while modernising agriculture. Its main activity is the provision of inputs, including finance, technical advice, seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, to cotton farmers in the North of the country. They equally buy, process and market their products. It operates nine ginneries with a combined capacity of 300,000 million tons per year and two mills with a capacity of 120,000 million tons (INS, 2011 - 2012). It has 5,000 employees with 2000 permanent ones. Accumulating losses tend to be covered by debt, which is estimated at FCFA 143 billion in 2022, equivalent to 1% of GDP. Unlike CDC, these debts were to financial and debt suppliers - posing less of a systemic risk. SODECOTON has nine ginneries with a capacity estimated at 300,000 mt per year equivalent to more than 120,000 mt of fibre. It has two mills with a combined capacity of 120,000 mt of seed annually. It equally produces about 14-19 million litres of edible oil and 60-70,000 tons of feed annually. The Company possesses 500 light vehicles and heavy machinery with total employment around 5000.

SEMRY

SEMRY was created in 1971 and is wholly owned by the Cameroonian government. They build and manage irrigation infrastructure for rice production in the north of the country. In the 1970's, they operated irrigation schemes in Yagoua and Maga. Initial results supported impressive yields in areas serving up to 12 million tons per hectare (mt/ha) in two cropping seasons (FAO, 2023). In the early days, rice from SEMRY accounted for two-thirds national consumption with 1,500 employees. SEMRY supports around 25,000 households and equally built schools, water supply points and health centres. However since the late 1980's attempts at rehabilitation and performance agreements have caused a disappointing operational and financial performance. SEMRY now has 450 employees and labour costs account for 13% of the total cost. Unlike CDC and SODECOTTON, SEMRY does not produce its own account and provides services to farmers such as seeds and other inputs, irrigation and ploughing services, milling, bagging and transport. But costs of services are twice as high as revenues and World Bank diagnostic revealed substantial weaknesses in SEMRY's internal governance, poor financial controls and a multitude of operational roles due to its historical evolution. Financially, SEMRY depends on the government and is unable to recover huge losses stemming from its activities. Annual investment subsidies increased from FCFA6 bn in 2014 to FCFA 12 bn in 2017 (CABRI, 2016).

Over the same period, operating subsidies varied from FCFA 0.4 billion to FCFA 1.8 bn. Indebtedness built up steadily from FCFA 0.4 billion in 2013 to FCFA 4.3 billion in 2017 composed mainly of tax debts and debt to suppliers. SODECAO reports to MINADER and was set up in 1974 to promote cocoa production in Cameroon (World Bank, 2014). About 600,000 rural households in the country depend on cocoa and Cameroon is the third largest exporter even as yields are only half those of Ghana. Production of coffee is dominated by smallholders who suffer from a lack of investment, planting material and possibilities for collaboration among stakeholders (Suh, 2022). SODECAO's role is to protect cocoa standards and maintain lands as well as production systems. SODECAO's role is to maintain and protect cocoa standards, maintain systems of land production and open up feeder roads as well as produce and distribute planting material to support economic diversification. SODECAO generates little revenue on its account and depends on the government and donors as well as export levies on cocoa.

It has a total of 780 employees, down from 2,230 in the mid-1980's. Meanwhile, the workforce is ageing and key skills are lacking. Receipts were FCFA 5. bn in 2016, FCFA 4.6 bn in 2017 and FCFA 5.9 bn in the first 10.5 months of 2018 (Osidimbea, 2023). This amounts to 32%, 33% and 43% respectively of forecast revenues, illustrating that planned activities have been severely limited. Cocoa production under climate variability and farm management challenges: Some farmers' perspective

SODECAO (Societe de Developpment de Cacao)

SODECAO has a strategic plan to enable it to boost its economic potential. This includes using high quality planting material to double cocoa yields. This includes doubling cocoa yields through high quality planting materials and training, providing incentives to young farmers and partnering with grower organisations to restructure and further invest in physical activities and equipment, completely overhauling internal performance management, HR and financial management as well as its public information program. The investments required to support and boost production are estimated at FCFA30 bn, in addition to the annual operating budget of FCFA 8 billion (World Bank, 2014). The financing for these investments could generate increasing export revenues with a levy of FCFA 8 per kg to FCFA 30 per kg, doubling the selling price of cocoa plants from FCFA 50 to FCFA100 from seeking external finance. Initiatives to partner with private sector and other organisations are equally considered along the lines of those in CDC, SODECOTON and SEMRY could provide a good model for SODECAO to follow.

SODECAO 's size has contracted and its plant and equipment are eroding. It possesses 7 regional centres with devolved management and quality control facilities (SODECAO, 2023). It equally has 25 geographical sectors where the bulk of its activities are carried out and 81 sections which cover small areas. There are three seed production facilities - the Mengang in the Center, AbongMbang in the East, and Nkoemvone in the South. Since they were abandoned in 1988, the seed production facilities have been left inoperational due to inadequate financial resources. Its ability to cooperate with key players in cocoa production and the marketing chain such as FODECC, the ONCC MTP, and IRAD is greatly limited, reducing their productivity and revenues. SODECAO was created by Decree 74/83 of February 2, 1974 as a public establishment that reports to MINADER. SODECAO is primarily a public service provider, financed directly by subsidies from MINADER and MINI through direct subsidies and support from donors, and generates little or no direct income from sales of its services or products.

Challenges facing SOEs

Challenges facing the agriculture sector include run-down assets, shortages in production and planting material and adverse weather conditions that affect productivity and the quality of output. However, SOEs are equally required to engage in public service obligations (PSO) and lack full reimbursements that adversely affect financial performance. These PSO's referred to as quasi-financial activities (QFAs) are of two sorts; (i) Service delivery and provision and maintenance of infrastructure within their geographical production areas, and (ii) a social role through price controls on some products with a large daily consumption such as rice, oil, and sugar.

Companies who receive state subsidies use this to cover costs. However, these subsidies are not calculated in real costs and are not adequate to compensate companies for the cost incurred. This has resulted in eroding SOEs assets over time as well as a reduction in quality and volume of services delivered. The shortage and depletion of planting equipment is another challenge faced by SOEs in the agricultural sector. However, there is significant capacity in research that is unexploited. The country has public agencies specialised in research, notably (the Institute of Agricultural Research and Development- IRAD). Like most public agencies, it faces challenges that impede the effective delivery of its mandate. Furthermore, research outputs are not used for commercial purposes in local companies, limiting its revenue capacity.

The government has begun implementing some recommendations such as oversight and monitoring that has been strengthened with emerging SOE monitoring platforms and improved annual SOE reports. The government has issued new legislation, designed to improve productivity and governance including but not limited to the selection of boards and senior management (MINEPAT, 2023). Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD) and the European Commission are equally providing complementary support in this area, including several SOE-specific diagnostics for the sector and providing some actionable recommendations to help improve the productivity of the sector.

Future Prospects and Recommendations for the most essential parastatals

Recommendations for CDC

CDC is facing a deepening operational and financial crisis due to the security crisis in the South West Region, severe cash shortages, and underinvestment in production facilities, inputs and activities. These factors are denting productivity and yields and accelerating the downward spiral in performance. An important first step is for the government to recognize public service obligations for state-owned enterprises and fully reimburse any payments resulting from price fixing price floors through the budget. The government should either allow the prices to rise in the domestic market or reimburse SOEs in full for lowering prices for consumers. A hybrid combination of the two will improve financial performance and free up investment in research and delivery of services.

Furthermore, plantations at other SOEs and CDC are old and lack maintenance and new plantings for many years. Given their precarious financial situation and the fact that full production maturity takes time (7 years for rubber to produce and 4 years for palm oil) an evaluation of the state investments is necessary to support the full rehabilitation of farms.

In terms of SOEs internal operations, they should aim to cut costs and improve efficiency by divesting non-core activities such as transport and actively engage in the financing and management to boost yield and productivity. Finally, modifying the composition of the board to include external independent managerial and technical expertise is indispensable.

Table 9: List of Parastatals and Sector of Activity

Company	Full Name	Activity	State	Public

			Share	Entities
ANAFOR	Agence Nationale d'Appui au Développement Forestier	ANAFOR supports communal, community and private foresters in the technical and financial planning of their forest plantation projects (definition of nursery and plantation routes, development of monitoring guides).	100	0
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation	CDC is an agro-industrial complex that grows, processes and markets tropical export crops. Its major products include banana, semi-finished rubber, palm oil and palm kernel oil.	100	0
CICAM	Cotonnière Industrielle du Cameroun	Transformation of Cotton	25	75
ECAM PLACAGES S.A	Compagnie d'Exploitation Industrielle des Bois du Cameroun	Exploitation of wood. Transformation and production of sliced sheets.	0	30
HEVECAM	Hévéas du Cameroun	Rubber Plantation	10	0
SEMRY	Société d'Exploitation et de Modernisation de la Riziculture de Yagoua	SEMRY provides a service package to farmers in the areas which it serves, composed of seeds, irrigation and ploughing	100	0
MAISCAM SA	Société Camerounaise de Maïserie	Production of maize flour, maize oil, grifts and seed cakes.	0	11.48
MIDEPECAM	Mission de Développement de la Pêche Artisanale et Maritime	Development of fisheries	100	0
SAFACAM14	Société Africaine Forestière et Agricole du Cameroun	Palm and Rubber plantation	20	11
SIC CACAO S.A	Société Industrielle Camerounaise du Cacao	Cocoa Transformation	0	15
SOCAPALM	Société Camerounaise du Palmier à Huile	Palm plantation and Palm oil production	14	0
SODECOTON	Société de Développement du Coton du Cameroun	Growing, purchasing, processing and marketing of Cotton.	59	0
SODEPA	Société de Développement et d'Exploitation des Productions Animales	Development and Promotion of farming	66.67	33.33
SOSUCAM	Société Sucrière du Cameroun	Sugar production	15	6
SOTRAMAS	Société de Transformation du Manioc de Sangmélima	Production and transformation of cassava	0	100
UTAVA	Unité de Traitements Agricoles par Voie Aérienne	Aviation company for agricultural treatments	100	0

IMPACT of SOEs on Agriculture Productivity and Food production

If SOEs increase investment, this will equally cause agri-food production to rise. This increase corresponds to our hypothesis of a positive impact of higher investment in the sector and confirms that the agriculture sector will remain an important part of the Cameroonian economy over the coming decades. Furthermore, Montalvo and Ravallion (2009) find that growth in agriculture contributes on average much more to reducing poverty than growth in non-agricultural sectors. This is the case as the agriculture sector employs a majority of informal sector workers, thereby holding important distributional effects in terms of policy outcomes.

Effects on Demand

Cameroon's agricultural policy has also led to a considerable increase in exports of agricultural products and agri-food products for more than 30%, in the previous two decades which is synonymous with the competitiveness of Cameroonian agricultural products (World Bank, 2019). This is all the more so as it is commonly accepted in the literature that trade is a determinant of long-term growth. This caused a decrease in the price of agricultural products following an increase in financial offers that are oriented towards the agricultural sector, which would contribute to improving competitiveness, developing regional trade and improving economic growth for Cameroon or CEMAC. In spite of all these gains, challenges are plenty and we recommend a few strategies to improve the effectiveness of spending and the design/delivery of agriculture programs.

Prospects for Development and Policy Recommendations

Through Cameroon's Poverty reduction and Growth facility (PRGF) strategy from 2005 - 2005, underpinned by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative[3] Agriculture is a main driver of economic growth. The national Development Strategy (2035) has equally reinforced the importance of the agricultural sector, causing ministries to cooperate increasingly on agricultural

[3] On May 1, 2006 Cameroon reached its completion point under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and became the 19th country to reach that point. Debt relief to Cameroon under HIPC is expected to be approximately US$1.267 billion in 1999 Net Present Value (NPV) terms, equivalent to a 27 percent NPV reduction of Cameroon's debt after traditional debt relief. This will reduce Cameroon's future debt service payments by about US$4.9 billion in nominal terms (IMF 2006b).

policy. However, a mix of policy inertia, poor management of publicly-owned companies and misdirected investments in certain parts of the agriculture value chain have slowed the pace of development in the agriculture sector. We provide some policy recommendations that can support the design and implementation of forward-looking policy, designed to increase agriculture yields, meet domestic demand and improve food security.

Better Cooperation between the Formal and Informal sectors: Agricultural policy in Cameroon should reinforce complementarities between the formal and informal sector by reforming the functioning of institutions. This is central to long term development of the sector and is paramount for economic development. The agricultural sector is dominated by farmers with far less than one hectare of land, as such every policy should be used as an avenue to collect data on demographics, farmed crops and distribution channels. For example, working with local cooperatives and associations in each region will allow the government to build its database of informal farmers, improving the effectiveness of policy implementation and outcomes and setting new inclusive standards for accountability.

Combating Corruption: Illegal and corrupt practices reduce the effectiveness of policy implementation. As such, combatting and eradicating poverty and poor governance are central to the long-term development of the sector. Policy makers should support ad hoc reviews of specific policies and programs and establish guidelines to assist civil administrators in performing checks and ensuring accountability. Combating corruption equally includes strengthening the legal security for investments in the agriculture sector. There should be greater accountability on both executors and beneficiaries to ensure that the government can swiftly transition to a goal-based system of incentives that prioritise output and the adoption of modern farming methods. The Supreme State Audit (CONSUPE) and CONAC (The national corruption agency) should undertake a more wholesome review of agricultural projects after their completion and match finance, output/outcomes and objectives of projects. Such projects should prioritise speaking with farmers who have been directly impacted by said policies to get a more coherent understanding of how policies are being executed.

Improvements in Basic Infrastructure: The agriculture sector cannot develop and mature fully without credible and quantifiable investments and improvement in our primary and secondary road infrastructure. The government should commit to grading at least 10,000 km of new roads linking rural areas to urban or peri-urban centres. Improving farm-to-market routes will reduce waste and cause food prices to fall as more farmers will be able to get their produce to markets on time. This will have a material impact on food poverty and reduce hunger for economically disadvantaged groups. Developing inland infrastructure will improve subsistence agriculture and input in the agriculture sector and cross-border infrastructure will boost regional competitiveness.

Improvements in agricultural productivity are necessary to improve the quality of payoffs and new investments. This can be achieved by updating farmer techniques and **Agence des Normes et la Qualite (ANOR)** can intervene to boost quality standards, education and training and access to communication technologies. Improvements in productivity are equally needed to pay off new investments, causing farmers to update production and farming techniques. All agriculture training centres should harmonise their teaching standards to improve the quality of farmers over the long run. Farmers should equally be sensitised on agricultural practices that will improve climate change resilience over the medium term.

The AfCFTA will equally improve access for Cameroon's agricultural products. Policy makers should ensure that targeted policies for cocoa, coffee and other cash crops follow strict guidelines that can support exports over the medium to long run. Removing non-tariff barriers and reducing tariffs could support trade in advanced economies. Policy makers could offer lower tariff-binding for selected products to boost competition. Furthermore, by liberalising non-agriculture products, this will reduce bias against agricultural products, thereby improving predictability and encouraging investments in the sector associated with spill overs. The government should lessen its reliance on trade distorting measures such as subsidies and quantitative restrictions. Improving market mechanisms will promote agricultural development.

ICT in Agriculture

Although Cameroon is an agri-focused country who exports basic commodities, information on the sector is virtually absent on the web. ICT usage has to be developed to support production (stakeholder information and training), or for marketing (marketing, sales, customer relations). This will ensure that stakeholders are properly informed about new and emerging techniques that can enable them to adapt to current trends and modernise agriculture in the rural sector. Data collection should equally be digitised to ensure that policy makers and civil society can understand the impacts of specific policies.

An output-based model for subsidies: Rather than simply give out agricultural subsidies, policy makers should ensure that subsidies are given to firms in exchange for higher production. Subsidies should be tied to specific objectives for certain products. For example, a company may receive **X number** of subsidies with the aim of boosting production by 15% over the year. This will boost productivity and subsidies will serve as a production boost rather than a loss-absorption tool as is currently the case for most parastatals.

The Budget Should promote the Formalization of Agriculture Firms: The budget should prioritize the formalization of agriculture companies to ensure that more business are formalised and create jobs in the real economy. This will equally make it easy to better understand how to support agriculture companies and ensure they integrate agriculture value chains in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, formalising agriculture companies will make it easier for companies to share their concerns to policy makers and outline the benefits of specific policies that are put in place such as the sharing of drought-resistant seeds and equipment. At present, policy makers face difficulties measuring the impact of specific policies on farmers as they are not able to properly identify them across the national territory.

Conclusion

Cameroon's agricultural policies achieved some success but challenges remain in its implementation and effectiveness. To ensure success of future agricultural policies, it is essential to address existing challenges and explore innovative approaches. Enhancing institutional capacity and coordination, encouraging private sector participation and investment, while promoting sustainable agriculture are key to implementing strategies that benefit all stakeholders.

Between 1894 - 1960, agriculture was linked to politics and indigenous food production was discouraged to promote large plantations, supported by forced and cheap labour. In 1964, after independence, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Animation (DARA) was created under the Federal Ministry of Planning to coordinate agricultural development in both states. This was followed by the first enactment of the first five-year development plan from 1961 - 1965 and a second round from 1966 - 1970, which included the creation of 14 more parastatals, bringing the total to 24 parastatals. The previous mismanagement of government-managed institutions caused the liquidation of the Food Crop Development Authority (MIDEVIV) and the National Produce Marketing Board (ONCPB).

Policies such as the new forestry law (Law No. 94-01) in 1994 and the New Agricultural Policy (1990–1998) focused on consolidating achievements in both self-sufficiency and export income and the significant improvement of performance in the sector and the environment.

From 2010 - 2020, agriculture policy took a turn and became institutionally driven, underpinned by bilateral cooperation by France (SCAC/AFD), Netherlands (SNV), Spain (AECID), Canada (CIDA), Germany (KfW, GIZ), USA (USAID), Japan (JICA), South Korea (KOICA). Multilateral financing complemented the government's investment in the agriculture sector via budgets that emphasised land management and productivity. However, the results have been spotty due to the absence of data and consistency in project management. The budget, however, plays an important role in the design of agricultural policy with a particular focus on four main themes; namely

- *Governance and institutional support for the sub sector of animal rearing and fishing industries*
- *Improvement of productivity and competitiveness of agricultural products)*
- *Improvement of environmental infrastructure and access to factors of production*
- *Improving the resilience of production systems, food security and the nutritional value of rural populations susceptible to climate change*

Agriculture policy over the last decade has gained significant importance in the budget(Finance Law), by providing tax incentives to support the purchase of inputs and materials, innovation, land and property acquisition and employment. This is supported by the distribution of seedlings to provide further support to small holders and farmers in the informal sector. It has equally become more balanced, moving away from the focus on cash crops to food crops to improve domestic agricultural capacity and meet local needs. Cameroon's agricultural policy has boosted production with the help of multilateral partners. However, this report finds that policies and projects alone are not sufficient in boosting agricultural yield and supporting domestic consumption. On a more positive note, there has been significant progress in identifying important areas and categorising spending from the budget, but this must be accompanied by a more rigorous follow-up of agricultural projects.

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