

Gearing up for growth

Cameroon unveils opportunities in large-scale projects that will create growth and prosperity

As a resource-rich country looking to engage sustainable development, Cameroon is moving further into the radar of global investors, particularly those in China.

The Central African republic, with 420 kilometers of Atlantic coastline stands out for its peace and stability within the region.

Headed by President Paul Biya, who was re-elected for a seven-year term in October 2011, this stunning country of 20 million people recently embarked on a mandate of "greater achievements", with huge infrastructural projects for energy, transport and agriculture launched last year.

"Cameroon will be transformed into a huge construction site," President Biya declared, referring to the national program put in place to develop roads, infrastructure, power production and transport networks.

"Cameroon has now embarked on the path toward emergence. The public investment budget for 2012 was significantly increased and assigned in two areas: infrastructure and production."

Brimming with fertile land and resources that range from oil and gas, timber, cotton, coffee, cocoa, and rubber, to diamonds iron, cobalt and bauxite, Cameroon is a natural choice for investors looking for rich returns.

A number of public reforms have been implemented and a welcoming business climate beckons. In order to fully unlock the country's potential however, the government plans to increase the national grid by a further 2,000 megawatts by 2020 — a move that will create 1,000 local jobs and ignite local industries.

Work on the huge Lom Pangar Dam started last August in the East of the country. Reminiscent of China's Three Gorges Dam, this is just one of the many hydropower schemes being undertaken in Cameroon with Chinese funding.

Work has also begun on the Kribi natural gas power plant which will have a gross capacity of 216 megawatts when completed. Another power plant at Nachti-



Cameroon has now embarked on the path toward emergence. The public investment budget for 2012 was significantly increased and assigned in two areas: infrastructure and production."

PAUL BIYA
PRESIDENT OF CAMEROON



gal, due to be commissioned within three years, is expected to produce between 200 and 250 megawatts.

Secure and transparent

In August this year, Cameroon joined an elite club of 77 countries when it was admitted to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. The move has lifted Cameroon into the realm of clean, secure, and transparent diamond producers, and will have a significant impact on the World Bank's Doing Business Index and Transparency International's rankings.

Beyond the traceability and openness that ensures the Kimberley Process, Cameroon will be able to increase its tax revenues.

Historic changes are also afoot within the economic, financial, social and cultural sectors, including the modernization of the rural economy. The launch of the Agricultural Bank and the Bank for SMEs will serve these communities and ultimately increase productivity by providing access to loans.

Thousands of low-cost houses are also being built in 20 cities around the country, and the government is keen to set up professional schools specializing in hotel management, tourism and agriculture. And, with only 10 percent of the country's roads currently paved, new and upgraded road and bridge links are urgently needed.

All works form part of the government's Vision 2035 initiative, outlined in the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper that will see Cameroon become an emerging market by 2035.

Poverty alleviation, industrialization, the consolidation of democracy and national unity and respect for diversity all feature as medium-term objectives for this microcosm of Africa.

As the strategy paper points out: "Cameroon's ambition is to transform from a primary phase to secondary import substitution phase with the manufacturing industry accounting for more than 23 percent of the gross domestic product, as against the current 11 percent and a secondary sector as a whole (including extractive industries) accounting for 40 percent of the gross domestic product."

"When Cameroon becomes an emerging country, its economy will be mainstreamed into the global economy in terms of trade and exports and the opening of local financial markets to foreign investments.

"At the macroeconomic level, the vision highlights the need to accelerate growth by stepping up forest, agro-pastoral and fishing activities and ensuring an industrial technological advancement with emphasis on the processing of local commodities. For this goal to be achieved, the vision advocates the stepping up of investments as the engine



Cameroon is one of the largest producers of palm oil in Africa.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

of growth. The development of industries and an ambitious trade policy should gradually lead to a change of the foreign trade pattern towards a more vigorous integration in world and regional transactions."

As a clear indication of Cameroon's potential, an International Monetary Fund mission visiting in May declared its economic prospects as "favorable" and predicted growth would reach 4.7 percent this year, due to a rebound in oil production and exports, increased public investment in infrastructure and ongoing initiatives to improve agricultural productivity.

While China has been a crucial partner of Cameroon for over 40 years, cooperation between the two states has reached new levels lately, with Chinese companies heavily participating in large-scale energy, water and infrastructure projects.

A model in Africa

President Biya qualifies the Sino-Cameroonian relation as "a model in Africa." At the beginning of 2011, Chinese Vice-

Premier Hui Liangyu visited Cameroon, while President Biya responded to Chinese President Hu Jintao's invitation with a three-day state visit to China in July 2011.

As a result of these meetings, several agreements were signed that have further strengthened the long-running bond between the two countries.

Xue Jinwei, who was China's ambassador in Cameroon for two and a half years until this summer, detailed the warm nature of the relationship: "We are both friend and brother countries, with a similar history and a common goal of development. We are especially convinced of developing our cooperation on the basis of sincere friendship, mutual equality and mutual benefit," he said.

"The new century opened up more cooperation in the fields of energy, health, education and infrastructure. In 2012, our major projects include road building, the Douala-Yaounde highway, the construction of 1,500 housing units by Chinese companies, the deepwater seaport at Kribi,

and improvement of the provision of drinking water in remote areas."

In this latter field, Chinese donors have been actively engaged with the Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation (Camwater) to enhance water supplies in the economic capital of Douala.

Other projects are also under negotiation, particularly in agriculture. Currently only 16 percent of arable land is used, yet Cameroon has huge agricultural potential.

This is particularly true in the palm oil business, where local companies, such as Pamol Plantations PLC, are actively seeking partnerships with Chinese investors in order to develop their capacities.

"Eximbank is playing a key role in the implementation of those major projects," Xue concluded. "The friendly relations will develop further, but 2012 is primarily a year of completion and implementation of the projects launched last year."

InFocus provided the story.

Cotton, the "white gold" of Cameroon

Produced mainly in the north and far north regions of Cameroon, cotton is the fifth-largest earner of export income for Cameroon. SODECOTON, the Cotton Development Company, is one of the largest employers in Cameroon, and plays a key role in driving economic growth within the agricultural sector in particular and the country as a whole. In charge of overseeing the production of Cameroon's high quality, hand picked and processed cotton, SODECOTON manages up to 250,000 cotton farmers, providing agricultural inputs, technical advice and training to allow them to improve their commercial potential.

Created in 1974 as a public-private company, SODECOTON achieved extremely high performances in 2011, with increased profits, increased production, and more loans attributed to farmers, as a result of an increase in the prices of raw material. It is now focused on encouraging crop diversification within the industry and supporting domestic farmers so that they can develop their expertise. "It is important to understand that producers are not only growing cotton. There are other crops that enter into the rotation cycle together with cotton, such as groundnuts, millet, sorghum, corn, and soya beans", Mohammed Iya, SODECOTON's general manager explained. "We provide agricultural input and advice for these crops too, but unlike with cotton, we have no obligation to buy them. Producers can therefore take advantage of our expertise to move to intensive agriculture with much higher yields."

Most of the cotton produced on farms managed by SODECOTON is exported to Asian and European markets, with only less than 5 percent sold locally.

"Cameroon produces between 70,000 and 100,000 tons of cotton fiber annually, while world production is 26 million tons. Half of the world's cotton is produced by China. It consumes all of it and is forced to import more. We export more than 55 percent of our production of cotton fiber to China, which is worth about \$60 million", Iya said, "yet we would like to be more involved in government delegations to China, since we have everything to gain from increased Sino-Cameroon relations."

Export to China		
Agricultural season	Tons	% of Production
2001 - 2002	510	0.5%
2002 - 2003	17,228	19%
2003 - 2004	26,109	27%
2004 - 2005	48,436	42%
2005 - 2006	53,754	63%
2006 - 2007	40,212	53%
2007 - 2008	19,706	45%
2008 - 2009	37,893	72%
2009 - 2010	20,311	46%
2010 - 2011	33,479	59%

Société de Développement du Coton du Cameroun - SODECOTON

Garoua, Cameroon

sodecoton@sodecoton.cm



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Lobe Estate PM. B. 3, Ekondo Titi, N'dian Department, S.W. Region, Cameroon

Tel No: + 237 33 39 35 48 | Fax No: +237 77 99 15 97 | pamol-lbe@pamol-plantations.com | www.pamol-plantations.com



Headquartered in Yaoundé, the Cameroon's Hydrocarbons Prices Stabilization Fund plays a key role as a socioeconomic regulator.



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The society of Petrol Depots ensures the safe storage and distribution of refined products all over Cameroon.

Vision 2035: Road map for Cameroon's economic takeoff

Resource-rich country boasts one of the most promising futures in Central Africa

Cameroon offers an excellent business environment for investors as it looks toward becoming an industrialized nation by 2035. Since 2002, laws have been put in place to both attract and protect savvy investors looking for lucrative deals in this natural resource-rich country.

Cameroon today is a market economy in which the government plays the role of regulator, giving priority to private initiatives, multilateral cooperation and regional integration. It is a founding member of the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, and it has Africa's most populous country Nigeria as a neighbor. With these links, Cameroon has a potential market of some 250 million consumers and strongly supports the notion of a free trade agreement at continental level within five years.

Minister of Commerce Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana paints a picture of Cameroon as an increasingly important hub for the region.

"All government actions in recent years have been primarily concerned with improving economic governance and strengthening public-private partnerships," he said. "The creation of the Anti-Corruption National Commission and the Financial Investigation National Agency illustrates this political will. The Cameroon Business Forum and the Regulation and Competitiveness Council have been established and

these represent both the government and the private sector."

Red tape has been cut and an Investment Promotion Agency serves to get the word out about Cameroon's many opportunities and incentives on a global level. Among its many comparative advantages, Cameroon boasts a cheap, industrious and well-trained workforce, and an Investment Charter that allows investors to repatriate profits, and have access to internationally ratified arbitration or court services to settle any disputes.

A diverse economy

Thanks to its diverse ecology and landscape, Cameroon has one of the most promising primary commodity economies in sub-Saharan Africa. Good agricultural conditions have led it to become the breadbasket of Central Africa, and it also boasts a wealth of forests, petroleum, bauxite, iron ore and hydropower.

The challenge, the minister acknowledged, is in harnessing the means to manufacture the final products at home, thereby adding greater value to the economy.

"In our quest to achieve greater competitiveness, we are transitioning to second generation agriculture. Our main stake lies within a greater local processing of these cultures, in line with the government's fight against rural poverty," he said. "Our agricultural products enjoy a comparative advantage thanks to their taste quality. After that, it is just a

question of standard-setting, packaging and cost control."

The minister and his team take part in numerous trips and government missions to promote their products in Africa, Europe, the US and other emerging economies.

"The importance of the Chinese market is undeniable and one of our targets," Atangana says. "At this stage, the volume of our exports is not enough to keep up with demand, so they remain tied to crude oil, cotton and wood. Our imports have accelerated over the last three years.

"Our action is primarily based on a spirit of partnership and technology exchange. We export rice, but it would be even better if the Chinese brought their technology here in order to produce and process the rice locally. Cameroon is also a major fruit producer. In these areas, it is important that our discussions focus on the technical cooperation.

"China is already participating very actively in the energy sector, and in building infrastructures of all kinds. Next, we would like to build wholesale markets in certain regions of the country as platforms to sort goods for national, sub-regional, regional and international level. China can make a great contribution to the development of these infrastructures."

Bringing oil to the door

Cameroon has been an official oil producer since 1977, with the exploitation of the Kolé field. In the 1990s, in an effort to boost national oil production the state undertook a number of incentives designed to accelerate the sector's liberalization, attract foreign investors and distribute further exploration permits.

"The sector needs high foreign capital now because our oil investments were made in the 1980s. We need to increase storage capacities and renovate our refinery infrastructure to ensure supplies security," said Ibrahim Talba Malla, general manager of Cameroon's Hydrocarbons Prices Stabilization Fund.

"The state must ensure the continuity of supply for local people and play the role of arbiter. To this effect, we have pilot stations in place in unprofitable areas that are supported by the state. All private operators have to do is support operating costs and the people can access products.

"We operate some oil fields, but we are not a big producer. What we expect through foreign capital is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system."

Cameroon's President Paul Biya qualified the Sino-Cameroonian relationship as a model for Africa because, he said, "it can help materialize a strategy for major achievements."

Chinese partnerships are heartily welcome to support Cameroon's oil production program. The Addaz group, which has been controlled by China's SINOPEC since 2009, recently acquired 80 percent of the Pecten Cameroon Corp, and is now consolidating its position as Cameroon's second-largest oil producer.

This acquisition has given China access to 11 pools of 42 exploration and production areas. There is room for more investment, however, and President Paul Biya has been consistently calling for further Chinese participation.

"The only difference between Cameroon and countries like Guinea or Nigeria is the level of oil and gas production. We have access to the sea, which opens us up to

Recent government actions have been primarily concerned with improving economic governance and strengthening public-private partnerships."

LUC MAGLOIRE MBARGA ATANGANA, MINISTER OF COMMERCE



What we expect through foreign capital is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system."

IBRAHIM TALBA MALLA, GENERAL MANAGER, CSPH



offshore field opportunities," Talba said. "All we need to do is revisit the tax incentive system. The framework is fully liberalized, and there are two laws that facilitate public private partnerships. Everyone can choose what suits them best. CSPH is a shareholder in many companies in the sector, and as such we are open to any offer for partnership."

Another instrumental player, the Society of Petrol Depots is working to ensure there is sufficient storage of refined petroleum products across the country. With demand increasing at a rate of 10 percent a year, it is a major undertaking, and in response, the SCDP is upgrading existing capacity, and constructing three new oil depots.

The largest, the Kribi oil terminal, will serve as a hub, providing at least 200,000 square meters of storage space that will facilitate 60 days of

safety stock, and supply the entire southern part of Cameroon until 2050. Gaston Eloundou Essomba, SCDP's General Manager, sees Kribi as an integrated project that will serve the whole country.

"We need to transport the product from Kribi to the other depots, so are planning to build a pipeline from Kribi to Yaoundé, the country's capital," he said. "These projects require large investments that go beyond our financing capacities so we need strategic partners. We are a very credible organization and for the past three years have obtained positive net results. Even so, our turnover doesn't allow us to raise funds for this important project so we need strategic partners.

"With the government's investment program driving up demand for energy and petroleum products, it is safe to say SCDP is a good risk!"

HYDROCARBONS PRICES STABILIZATION FUND CAISSE DE STABILISATION DES PRIX DES HYDROCARBURES

At the heart of the downstream petroleum sector of Cameroon

The Hydrocarbons Prices Stabilization Fund (CSPH) was created in the wake of the global petroleum crisis in 1973 through decree No.74/458 of 10th May, 1974 and then experienced a corporate re-organization in 1998 by virtue of decree No. 98/165 of 26th August, 1998. CSPH is a corporate entity endowed with legal personality and financial autonomy, placed under the sovereign control of the Minister in charge of price regulation.

The core mission of the Hydrocarbons Prices Stabilization Fund (CSPH) is **regulating the price of petroleum products across the national territory in order to protect the Cameroonian consumer using these said products.** CSPH executes its core defined mission through partial or total subvention of price hikes of petroleum products across the national triangle using financial means at its disposition.

CSPH equally participates in **conceptualizing the energy policy of Cameroon given its involvement in the exploration, production, refining, storage and distribution** of hydrocarbon products in the country.

With the liberalization of the supply arm of the petroleum sector in Cameroon in 1998, CSPH ensures the regular consistent supply of hydrocarbon products across the national territory through the proper **regulation of the price of petroleum products.** CSPH, in addition, provides necessary and strategic oversight in fair and equitable competition among operators in the sector.

In the history of the petroleum sector in Cameroon, CSPH has been very instrumental: CSPH was an active player in the creation in Cameroon of the National Refinery Company (SONARA) and the Cameroon Petroleum Depot Company (SCDP). CSPH, in addition, has expanded over the years in terms of investing in its infrastructure: building, through self financing, its corporate headquarters in the heart of downtown Yaoundé, and the construction of the Maroua Gas Facility. Similar huge investment is ongoing in Bertoua.

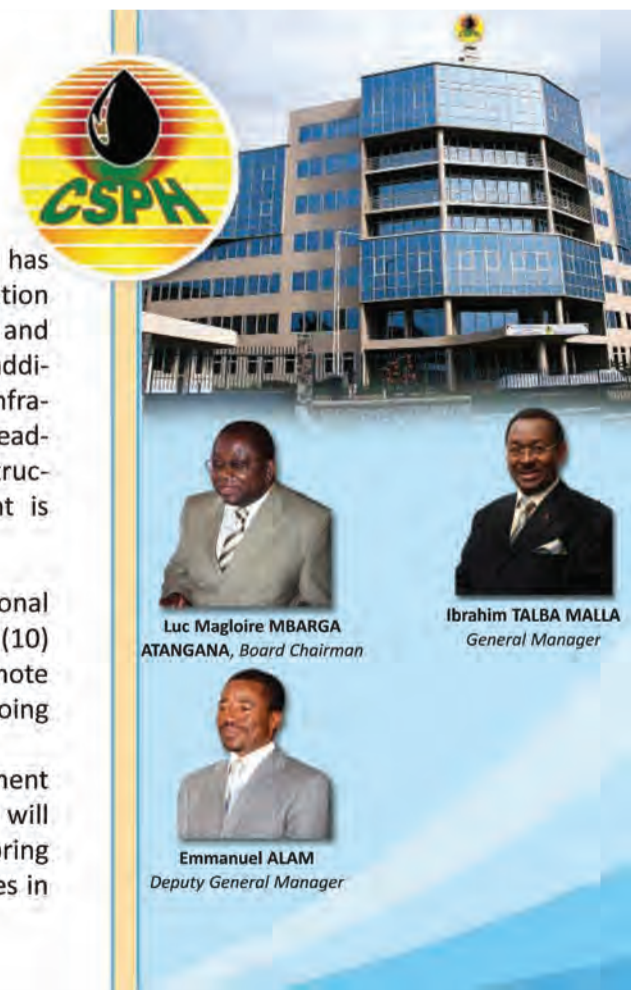
In terms of expanding Service Petrol Stations across the national territory, CSPH has been very active. There are currently ten (10) localities with full functioning Service Petrol Stations in remote hinterland areas of Cameroon. Similar investments are ongoing in Akono and Yabassi.

CSPH participates in joint ventures. Infrastructural investment schemes with the National Hydrocarbons Company (SNH) will booster, in the short run, gas storage capacities and thereby bring a sustainable solution to Liquefied Natural Gas supply hurdles in the country.

Headquarters: Rue 1025, Avenue Konrad Adenauer (Warda)

B.P: 501 Yaoundé Cameroon; Tél: (237) 22 50 30 00 / 22 50 30 02

Fax: (237) 22 50 30 05 Website: www.cspH.cm Email: contact@cspH.cm



Regulating to provide the supply of petroleum products nationwide

Sustainable management of natural resources crucial

Environmental protection, sustainable development and natural resources preservation are some of the fundamental pre-requisites and challenges that feature in Cameroon's "Vision 2035". As President Paul Biya emphasized, Cameroon's environmental challenge is to "preserve the green lung of the planet while ensuring forestry revenues at the same time".

InfocusReports speaks exclusively to Environment Minister, Pierre Hélé, in greater depth about this vision.

IF: Let's talk about the Durban Summit, which took place in January. What were the main concepts discussed, and to what extent is Cameroon concerned?

Minister Hélé: We were expecting a lot from it but the results have fallen behind our expectations in the four areas that comprise the Bali Action Plan, which speaks about a shared vision based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility; adaptation to harmful climate changes; attenuation thanks to REDD+ (national strategies of UN-REDD program) and MDP mechanisms; and implementation instruments (financing, technology transfer and capacity strengthening).

What are the main challenges for preservation and protection?

There is a lot of construction going on in the country and it is imperative we get the balance right. In December 2011, we changed to the "Ministry of Environment, Nature Preservation and Sustainable Development", widening our range of responsibilities to five strategic fields:

- Sustainable management of biodiversity, where the objective is to reverse the current trend of damage

to natural resources.

- Fighting against climate change; that goes mainly through avoiding damage, deforestation, and promoting preservation, sustainable management and reforestation.

- Fighting against desertification; the "Green Sahel" operation needs to be continued, so basically it implies growing trees in arid areas, especially in the north of the country.

- Fighting against pollution, nuisances and dangerous chemicals; we will implement a fiscal incentive system to favor the use of green and biodegradable substances. The systematic repression of polluters will also be implemented.

- Sustainable development promotion; we will ensure environmental compliance of every important socioeconomic project in the country. Indeed, environmental and social studies are mandatory before a project begins and as it develops audits must be performed.

As part of our plan to promote sustainable development, we are also calling upon our educators. Schools, from elementary to university level, must make people understand and live the realities of our world, of the environmental challenges it faces and how to tackle them. This is everyone's duty to preserve environment and promote sustainable development.

In terms of coastal preservation, do you intend to bring in new laws to ensure prevention and protection against pollution?

An institutional framework for coastal and marine protection already exists in Cameroon. We have representatives on our shores that can act at the very first alert. We also have a national inspection squad ready to intervene at any time.



Pierre Hélé, Minister of Environment, Nature Preservation and Sustainable Development

On top of that, Cameroon has made amendments to the Abidjan Convention protocol, about state cooperation in fighting pollution in a time of crisis, in order to strengthen our own national emergency plans in case hydrocarbons are spilled in the sea.

The environment and natural resources are fundamental pillars of Cameroon's development. What is your policy in terms of the sustainable management of those resources, especially in mining, water and hydrocarbons?

In accordance with the Convention on Biodiversity, we set up a sustainable management program of natural resources and biodiversity loss reduction. In order to implement it, we have carried out suitable strategies. We have programs for forestry, flora and fauna.

Mining resources are plentiful (bauxite, nickel, cobalt, iron ore, gold, diamond etc.) and a strict mining code was set up regarding their exploitation. Several mega



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Protecting and preserving Cameroon's natural balance is key priority for the country's government.

projects are being carried out at the moment.

We have many hydropower projects going on such as Nachtigal, Memvéele, Menchum, Mekin, Song Mbenge and of course Lom Pangar. That is very interesting for our country because we will have plenty of green and non-polluting energy, which we could even export.

Whatever the project, it is important to understand that every one of them must be compliant with environmental studies.

To what extent are you cooperating with China in your field?

Chinese cooperation is quite hard to quantify, because it is so broad

and diversified, in every sector and at every level. China is indeed a strategic partner for Cameroon. You only have to look around at the dams, conference centers, stadiums, roads, hospitals and so on. Cooperation goes beyond infrastructure, however. We have financial cooperation, as well as academic and technological.

In terms of urban development, the option chosen by the President is clear: the use of green energy, hydropower and solar energy especially. The goal is to absorb the energy deficit the country is currently facing, but to absorb it in a sustainable development fashion.

That's why we are putting the

emphasis on building dams and solar facilities. We support that step toward a greener economy. This is the trend and the challenge ahead is to achieve all this as quickly as possible.

Why should Chinese businesses select Cameroon?

Cameroon, known for its legendary hospitality, is pleased to welcome Chinese partners to its soil. It is a stable and peaceful country and has a very attractive investment code to match the many investment opportunities it offers. I invite Chinese people to come and invest in Cameroon so our two countries can grow together.



Ministry of Environment, Nature Preservation and Sustainable Development
Boulevard du 20 Mai, Immeuble Ministériel N°2 P.O Box 320, Yaounde, Cameroon
Tel No: +237 22 23 34 23 | Fax No: +237 22 23 60 51 | celcomminep@yahoo.fr | www.minep.gov.cm



Domestic producers get ready for partnership

Cameroon counts many ambitious companies eager to integrate into the globalized economy

With long-term sustainable development the leading priority for President Paul Biya, the Cameroon government is actively looking to increase water and energy resources. Among the targets that have been drawn up is an increase in access to drinking water from 35 percent to 60 percent by 2016 and to have 3,000 megawatts of power by 2020.

"Cameroon enjoys a total power production capacity of 1,017 megawatts, including 720 megawatts of hydroelectric power and 297.2 megawatts of thermal power," Basile Atangana Kouna, Minister of Water and Energy, explained.

"What these figures show is that the offer is very limited against the demand that is growing consistently. The government is therefore working to establish a sustainable supply both in terms of production and quality of service, spatial distribution and access to services across the territory. To achieve this, we have drawn up the Development Plan of the Electricity Sector by the year 2030. Investment required for its implementation is estimated at 4 trillion CFA (\$7.5 trillion)."

With a network of new gas and hydroelectric power plants earmarked for development across the country, AES-SONEL, the national company for electricity production, transport and distribution, is gearing up for major expansion.

A highly successful partnership between the state and the US-owned AES Corporation, which has a presence in 27 countries worldwide, AES-SONEL has increased electricity production by almost 30 percent in Cameroon since it began operations in 2001, significantly reducing the country's dependence on hydropower. During that time, it has invested more than 550 billion CFA in Cameroon in both production capacity and infrastructure, and played a key role in opening up the sector to globalization and increasing competitiveness.

As Jean David Bilé, General Manager of AES-SONEL, said: "Our growth rate over the last five years has been between 7 and 8 percent. Turnover for 2011 amounted to 222 billion CFA for a balance sheet valued at around 610 billion CFA.

"The sector is growing by more than 7 percent a year, which means a doubling of capacity every 15 years. The demand is enormous. Over the next 10 years, we will need to invest between 2 and 4 billion CFA in the sector. AES-SONEL is therefore keen to provide the necessary support to the government to attract additional private investors."

Camwater, the state water provider, is meanwhile, actively working with international donors to strengthen the water supply in urban areas and create new infrastructure.

The company has set up an investment program of around 400 billion CFA and is working on a two-phase project with China to develop the drinking water system in Douala.

"China provides valuable financial assistance and we benefit from their proven expertise in infrastructure," said General Manager Jean-Williams Sollo.

Harvesting growth

Thanks to abundant rain and fertile soils, Cameroon's agricultural producers are well prepared for expansion and development.

"We are fifth in the world in terms of cocoa, and 22nd in terms of coffee, yet we aim to market a high-quality product that will increase substantially in volume," Michael Ndoping, general manager of the National Board of Coffee and Cocoa (ONCC), explained.



Jean David Bilé, general manager of AES-SONEL

Created in 1991 to augment the production of cash crops, regulate exports and ensure international quality standards, ONCC is now promoting Cameroon's new image.

With cocoa the second-largest export after oil, it is vital the precious resource adds as much value to the economy as possible, which means processing the bean at home. "My vision of the cocoa sector is an industry modernized," said Jérôme

Mvondo of Cocoa Development Company SODECAO.

Palm oil has also proved to be a lucrative resource for Cameroon. One of the largest names in this field, Pamol Plantations Plc manages three estates that produce an annual output of 14,000 tonnes of palm oil, 1.5 million seeds, 1,200 tonnes of palm kernels, 1,400 tonnes of laundry soap and 520 tonnes of rubber.

In April, the company launched a program to extend the existing plantations and replant trees, and hopes to attract international investment to bring the endeavor to fruition.

General Manager Obi-Okpun Wanobi Osang said the project will go a long way to alleviating rural poverty. "Land has already been acquired for the new plantations and we have replanted palms on 1,500 hectares. We expect it to create around 3,000 direct jobs and up to 15,000 indirect jobs by completion," he said. "The market is very promising. We don't have enough palm oil to satisfy the local demand, so during the rehabilitation process, we will contribute our quota and reduce the imports

that affect our balance of payments. Pamol Plantations is a very profitable business with bright prospects and expectations both in the local and international markets.

"Abroad, the emphasis on biofuels underscores the high demand, so foreign companies are interested in investing here. We have the necessary wealth of experience and the economic requisites, so we call on them to join us."

Another flagship company, Camlait is the country's leading dairy producer. Thanks to a mass diversification strategy, Camlait boasts 15 percent annual growth and a 50 percent market share on fresh products.

"Cameroon is a dynamic country with many companies eager to integrate internationally," said CEO Paulin Landry Toukam Zuko.

"Camlait wishes to benefit from market opportunities to become a major player in the sub-region and needs partners to support this vision. Our expertise is not negligible and can interest foreign companies. We also have a good knowledge of the African market, and flexibility."

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Tel: +237 33 37 44 60 / Fax: +237 33 37 28 05

ONCC-NCCB
National Cocoa and Coffee Board
ONCC-NCCB
oncc2003@yahoo.fr
www.oncc.cm

DEVELOPMENT EXPANSION QUALITY
SODECAO
Société de Développement du Cacao
SODECAO BP 1651, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Tel: +237 22 3045 44 | Fax: +237 22 30 3395
contact@sodecao.cm | www.sodecao.cm

camwater
CAMEROON WATER UTILITIES CORPORATION
www.camwater.cm

LABOGENIE
Laboratoire National de Génie Civil
LABOGENIE
(National Civil Engineering Laboratory)
BP 349, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Tel: +237 22 30 30 06 | Fax: +237 22 30 24 55
info@labogenie.cm | www.labogenie.net

MATGENIE
BP 2063 Messa, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Tel: +237 22 23 08 16
Fax: +237 22 22 31 10
matgenie2006@yahoo.fr

Tradex
Vous êtes chez vous
TRADEX
BP 1468 Douala, Cameroon
Tel: +237 33 43 63 75 / 76
Fax: +237 33 43 63 80
tradex@tradexsa.cm
www.tradexsa.com

Cameroon, rising as an investment destination

The dynamic government is actively pursuing modernization of its financial mechanisms

As part of its plan to become an emerging nation by 2035, Cameroon is launching a number of major projects that will completely modernize the country. InFocus Reports speaks to Alamine Ousmane Mey, Cameroon's Minister of Finance to find out what is being done to attract the investment needed to reach this goal.

AOM: The creation of wealth and jobs requires productive investments. Such investments require a number of conditions in the host country, such as the existence of infrastructure, energy sources and services. The Head of State, President Paul Biya has therefore advocated a massive transformation of Cameroon's environment to turn the country into a "major construction site" in an attempt to facilitate the implementation, development and realization of investments, thus fueling the engine of growth. In order to engage the private sector, however, the government must make the first move, and this is what we see today.

To develop its infrastructure, the State has undertaken a vast program funded through internal and external resources which aims to develop transport infrastructure so that production sites can be linked to consumption centers. The transportation of goods from one point to another will no longer be hampered by heavy loads and reduced competitiveness. Just like the emergency programs initiated by the Head of State, many roads will be rehabilitated or built to ensure Cameroon is connected to other countries in the sub-region.

Another fundamental factor is energy supply, both for factories and households. The current sup-

ply (1,000 MW) falls well below demand and penalizes economic activity. That's why today various power plants are under construction such as the Kribi gas plant and the hydroelectric dams of Lom Pangar, Memvele, and Mekin.

As soon as they become operational, Cameroon's energy supply will be strengthened and our economic growth fueled.

The projects are being implemented thanks to the participation of international bodies — the World Bank, the African Development Bank, Eximbank, for example — but also with resources from the domestic market. They will provide more and better energy and will support business expansion and development. These projects are called "structuring projects" because they imply that a certain number of activities will be developed around them.



To satisfy Cameroon's huge investment needs we now need to detach from public aid to focus more on the equity market."

ALAMINE OUSMANE MEY MINISTER OF FINANCE

Because of their size and scope, they will create many jobs and Cameroon will benefit from technology transfers; because of their location, Cameroonians and foreigners will be able to work jointly. The search for financing sources for these large projects is therefore fundamental: they are the cornerstone of Cameroon's developing economy and a milestone towards horizon 2035. **How will these projects be funded?**



Alamine Ousmane Mey, Minister of Finance

Cameroon has been engaging in a process of modernization over the past five years. We started heavy public finance reforms, with the aim of improving resource mobilization and ensuring more efficient

allocation of these resources. This resulted in reforms in the field of treasury management and in the implementation of a new national financial regime. Efforts were also made to improve and diversify funding sources.

As an illustration, the 2012 State budget amounts to CFA 2,800 billion including 500 billion external financing.

We have modernized the State



Important changes are afoot at the Ministry of Finance.

PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

financing instruments so as to provide a significantly improved risk profile, which makes it very attractive to bankers and investors. We will therefore seek further subscriptions for our treasury bonds.

This operation, which began in 2011 with a collection of CFA 50 billion, continued in 2012 and has already raised CFA 20 billion. This is in addition to the 2010 bond issue that had collected 200 billion.

These funds supplement the State's budget for operating and capital costs. Investors may be interested in Cameroon's productive projects given that they will be a source of significant ROI with an appreciable 7 percent to 8 percent growth. All of this will encourage full employment and wealth creation; it will be an efficient poverty alleviator, and accompanied by an improved financial management system. It is an ongoing process and one we are deeply committed to.

How important are international partners in funding these projects?

Developing economies are expe-

riencing a significant growth in their investment needs, and consequently, states need to go to capital markets to leverage additional resources.

The issue for Cameroon was about improving the quality of its signature. That has thankfully been done, as we met the convergence criteria. This allows us to reach private and institutional investors. Public aid for development, concessional loans and donations are all likely to experience a gradual decline because donating countries have engaged with financial austerity programs due to the global financial crisis. It is therefore necessary for Cameroon to diversify its funding sources.

How are you increasing private sector involvement?

At the Cameroon Business Forum meeting held each year, government officials meet private sector representatives. Supported by the IFC, the Government has evaluated the possible improvements and changes that can be made in order to attract more private investors. This is how for instance we were able to reduce

the business start-up process to 48 hours on average, and the time needed to deliver land titles. We have also created approved management centers to support businesses.

We have also made significant efforts to improve access to financing with innovations now sealed in the legislative landscape. The investment rate today is well below 20 percent of the GDP. We aim to raise it to 25 percent through the public investment budget in order to encourage more FDIs.

Our environment offers strong opportunities for entrepreneurship, when compared to the saturated markets of developed countries.

If processing industries come and settle here, we'll be able to add value locally and contribute to the enrichment of all actors in the chain. An industrial base is also emerging.

A number of Asian companies are already settling in Cameroon, and we welcome them since it means that Cameroon has an attractive business climate capable of attracting even more investors looking for profitable projects.

Closer financial integration

New fiscal measures are fueling the ambitious country's brighter and more stable future

The Cameroonian economy has enjoyed robust growth in recent years, with this impressive success supported by the launch of new strategies and mechanisms to raise funds for public investment and the launch of major development projects.

In the early 1990s, the country of 20 million people focused on privileged external financing, but since 2007 the government has recalibrated its strategy towards the financial markets to leverage additional internal and external resources.

Biya. "Thanks to a new budgetary rigor and the sacrifices consented by the Cameroonian people, our public finance has come back to a better orthodoxy."

In 2006, Cameroon loosened the knot around its indebtedness in a move that paved the way for its economic takeoff. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are among the international organizations that have recognized this progress. International credit rating agencies have acknowledged this

strong economic performance, with one assigning Cameroon its first ever BBB- rating. This has helped local banks re-inject their overly voluminous liquid assets into the real economy. Two years ago, the State allowed the financing of public investments through local banks, with the huge sums generated through a syndicate of domestic banks quickly

reinvested in key public energy projects across the country. In September 2010 and June 2011, the Ministry of Finance issued two bond loans of CFA 200 billion and CFA 150 billion, with the former generating CFA 203 billion CFA in 15 days — a record in Africa. In addition, a treasury bond of CFA 50 billion was also issued.

Through these mechanisms, Cameroon has found a way to diversify sources of financing and optimize the mobilization of abundant domestic savings. These non-inflationary resources are

also less expensive than traditional financing, with interest rates below 5.25 percent.

Alamine Ousmane Mey, Minister of Finance, said these changes show his country is clearly moving closer to European financial behavior, by modernizing its financial system and the mechanisms of financial intermediation. "Current economic growth in Cameroon allows investors to achieve a very profitable rate of return compared to many other places in the world," he said.

In January of this year, the World Bank published a short update on Cameroon's economic and financial situation. It noted: "Credit to the private sector expanded at end-September by about 25 percent year-on-year (compared to 5 percent at end-September 2010). In addition to a more vibrant economic activity, this strong expansion also reflected partly the increased competition in the banking sector, following the entry of two new banks."

Established in 2003, the Douala Stock Exchange (DSX) is a key instrument in the financing of the national economy, and the ideal platform for increasing companies' credibility, investment appeal and fiscal transparency.

"Establishing a strong and competitive economic infrastructure made it necessary to find an alternative to traditional means of financing whose boundaries are somewhat inevitable," said DSX Director General, Pierre Ekoulé Mouangué.

"Modernizing public infrastructure, creating or increasing businesses production capacity, continuing Cameroon's steady economic growth, all require heavy investments that the banks cannot provide, as they are limited by prudential ratios and balance sheet structure. Conditions for listing on the DSX have raised credibility on companies and their account books."

Generous tax incentives attract investors

Cameroon's tax system has undergone a comprehensive program of reform in recent years after President Paul Biya challenged revenue officials to modernize the general tax code through innovation, simplification and clarification.

New measures such as the widening of the tax base and unique identifiers for each tax payer have increased tax take and the tax collection milestone of CFA 1,000 billion was reached this year.

A specific tax system was also gradually put in place for the DSX to encourage companies to list on the financial market to promote the modernization and transparency of their operations and the mobilization of savings for the long-term financing of the economy. This is best illustrated by the 2007 finance law that introduced a reduced rate of corporation tax of 30 percent for companies that meet certain criteria such as opening their capital up to 20 percent of the stock market.

As a result of these tax reforms, revenues from taxes have increased significantly, from CFA 637.7 bil-



Pierre Titti, Deputy Minister of Finance

lion in 2004, to CFA 855.7 billion in 2010.

Ministers such as Cameroon's Deputy Minister of Finance, Pierre Titti, are quick to highlight this extra revenue is being put to good use, helping to alleviate poverty, encourage social progress, promote decentralization, support educational institutions, create employment, and boost certain sectors such as forestry and mining.

In a January 2012 report, the

Extensive advantages are provided for in the Investment Code to encourage foreign and local investors to establish and develop their business in Cameroon.

- Freedom to transfer profits earned and to invest abroad
- Full exemption from taxes and levies for a period of 10 years
- No subjection to the salary scale laid down in the Labor Code
- Exemption from all custom duties and taxes on imports or exports
- Freedom to operate foreign currency accounts in the local banking system
- New Investment Charter with 4 regimes for tax benefits (basic, SME, strategic and reinvestment)

World Bank stated: "Cameroon's tax regime for small- and medium-sized enterprises will be simplified, allowing for deductions ... these measures are expected to reduce the tax burden faced by these enterprises and are hoped to foster their development."

Customs reforms boost national tax take

The transformation of Cameroon's tax system is not just limited to the evaluation and collection of personal, commercial and sales tax, with the hard work of the republic's Customs agency also generating substantial revenues for the government.

Thanks to a series of bold reforms and a judicious collaboration with its various partners, the performances achieved over the past three years by Cameroonian Customs have exceeded all initial expectations and revenue targets.

In 2004, Customs revenues totaled only CFA 324 billion, but by 2010 that figure had risen to CFA 503.5 billion. Agency chiefs say this outstanding performance is due to a number of measures that have been undertaken by Customs agents.

These include the introduction of a computerized system that improved procedures and reduced delays, reinforcement of Customs tools and financial means and the implementation of policy performance indicators. The improvement of the revenues collection system at land borders and hinterland offices and the simplification and facilitation of Customs clearing procedures are other important factors that have boosted the authority's performance, efficiencies and presence.

While Cameroon's tourism industry has yet to fulfil its rich potential, the country is a member of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and attracts substantial foreign finance and funding from CEMAC members. These include the Central Afri-

can Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. Given China's importance to Cameroon, many Chinese businessmen and government officials live and work in the republic and the two countries have enjoyed more than 40 years of positive diplomatic, commercial, cultural and trade relations.

China is funding and building major new infrastructure and other construction projects that include hospitals, schools, highways, government offices, sports stadia and power plants. "Throughout the past 40 years, the friendly relations and cooperation between China and Cameroon have continued to grow in all areas — economic, cultural, social," said Xue Jinwei, former Chinese ambassador to Cameroon.



Ministry of Finance

Collines des Ministères, Yaounde, Cameroon

Telephone: +237 3223 2299 | Fax: +237 3223 3717 | info@finances.cm | www.finances.cm



Mining sector offers wealth of investment openings

Ministry of MINMINDT plans to turn natural assets into real industrial opportunities

Rich in natural resources thanks to its vast mineral deposits such as gold and diamonds, Cameroon is taking advantage of its mineral wealth with the help of foreign investors, including numerous companies from Asia.

The Cameroonian government has identified the development of the mining industry as a priority in the short, medium and long term as the country strives to hit key economic goals by 2035.

Despite the global economic slowdown that affects Western countries currently, the government is determined to make the mines and geology sector a core pillar of economic growth and sustainable development. Ignored by previous administrations, the fledgling mining sector has yet to contribute much to GDP or socio-economic development, but that is now set to change with dozens of new projects in the pipeline.

The new pro-business mining code has resulted in the issuing of 100 exploration licenses and foreign direct investment is starting to flow into the sector. However, like other industries, several difficult challenges lie ahead, including limited transport network and energy supply on site.

Of course, confidence is high and all these goals will be achieved with the help and support of international investors who are eager to exploit large reserves of gold, diamonds, cobalt, iron ore, bauxite, nickel, alumina and uranium.

According to official government data, Cameroon has a billion tons of bauxite and at least the same quantity of iron ore. Titanium reserves are estimated at 300 million tons and cobalt, nickel and manganese deposits at 225 million tons.

In addition, Cameroon has oil and gas reserves that are thought to total 250 million barrels and 187 billion cubic metres of natural gas. The aggregate value of all these natural resources is more than \$100 billion and at least 200,000 direct and indirect jobs could be created by their exploration, extraction and related activities. In order to attract substantial FDI to develop the sector, the government is pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into transport and energy infrastructure such as highways, ports, railways and power plants.

The Ministry of Mines, Industry and Technological Development, is responsible for developing strategies for industrial development by enhancing natural resources and mines.

Headed by Emmanuel Bonde, the ministry is reforming, developing and implementing a nationwide industrialization plan. The minis-



Emmanuel Bonde,
minister of MINMINDT

tatives from around the world, the event included presentations and speeches from leading mining figures and government officials and highlighted areas that need substantial FDI to enable exploration. More than half of the country remains

“My ministry has developed a program to implement technological poles over the territory corresponding to the competitive advantages of each region.”

EMMANUEL BONDE, MINISTER OF MINMINDT

try is also facilitating geological prospecting and mining activities, local processing of agricultural products and promotion of private investment.

With support from the World Bank, MINMINDT organized the Second Forum of Cameroon Mining in Yaoundé from May 29 to 31, 2012, to discuss the best way for the country to maximize its mining potential. Attended by 400 industry represen-

unexplored and this untapped potential needs investors in order to be revealed.

Cameroon has applied to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to structure its mining industry with international standards. The request shows the determination of Cameroon's government to boost transparency over payments by mining and energy companies to public departments and agencies.

Ministry of Mines, Industry and Technological Development

P.O. Box 812 - Yaoundé - CAMEROON

Telephone: +237 22 22 17 38 | Fax: +237 22 22 17 40 | www.spm.gov.cm/fr/administrations-publiques/mines-et-industrie



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

With billions of tons of mineral reserves, Cameroon is enticing many international investors.

Following a series of recent sector reforms, the government's role is more focused on the organization, regulation, promotion and control of mining and petroleum activities. These forward-thinking changes were characterized by the recent establishment - with assistance from the World Bank - of modern legislative and institutional frameworks in a comprehensive new mining code.

The code offers generous tax breaks to mining investors while ensuring that Cameroon gets a fair share of the billions of dollars of minerals over the coming decades. Companies wishing to mine in the central African nation will need to prove they have adequate financing or permits will not be granted.

Meanwhile, in a further sign of the importance of the mining sector to state leaders, Cameroon recently joined the Kimberley Process on diamond certification in move that will enable production to commence at a major deposit discovered in 2008.

“Transactions in diamonds can only be possible with countries that are participants to the Kimberley accord,” Minister Bonde commented during a ceremony to mark the occasion.

In an earlier speech focused on Cameroon's massive mineral wealth, Minister Bonde said: “We plan to turn these natural assets into real industrial opportunities, through a policy of integration of the industrial landscape, an increased level of processing resources locally and the establishment of basic infrastructure support such as energy and communication networks. Our target is to boost the industry to a contribution 25 percent of GDP in forthcoming years.”

“My ministry has developed a program to implement technological poles over the territory corresponding to the competitive advantages of each region. Sino-Cameroonian cooperation deserves to be more diversified and strengthened; the private sector will find reliable guaran-

tees through our investment charter and sectoral codes. Cameroon is a host of foreign productive investment, reflecting the institutional stability, an economy in constant progress and an open and democratic society.”

This highly positive view is echoed by his ministerial colleague Alamine Ousmane Mey, Cameroon's Minister of Finance, who is putting in place all the various legal and regulatory frameworks that will allow mining companies to operate effectively and efficiently.

“Cameroon is well on track for development and is a country that offers peace, security and stability,” Minister Mey said, “and so offers very suitable ground for fruitful investments. Our current rate of economic growth gives investors a very profitable rate of return compared to many other places in the world.”

InFocus provided the story

Local firms help build a 21st century nation

Diversification is the watchword for the companies making Cameroon modern

A host of ancillary companies are lining up to engage in Chinese investment in their development projects.

Gulfin, a major transporter of bulk liquids, is one of them. As part of its diversification strategy, the company is planning to open at least 10 new gas stations by the end of next year.

Deputy Director Edouard Edmond Bateky said: “We try to develop partnerships to cover different geographical areas with other recognized transport companies. We thus offer our ships to major and other international traders to transport from and to Africa, Europe and the Americas.”

“We are ready to develop a partnership with China in particular and Asia in general by signing a contract of affreightment for the transportation of crude oil, the main advantage being that our ships are based in the Gulf of Guinea, near large deposits.

Regarding our distribution network, we seek partnerships on lubricants, with foreign companies willing to expand in Africa.

“We can offer them a network that is constantly improving to meet international standards and the maximum requirements in environment, safety and hygiene.”

Tradex, Cameroon's crude oil and petroleum products export and trading company, boasts a network of 35 service stations across the whole country, and a market share of nearly 10 percent. It demonstrates the best marketing efficiency ratio per station in Cameroon and is a leading importer of petroleum products.

A shining example of a forward-thinking company, Tradex is trying to diversify its offering to cover all aspects of the distribution.

“Tradex's strategy relies on expanding our network, improv-

ing our services and innovating our products,” general manager Perrick Jean Nyodog explained. “Naturally, our sub-regional expansion remains a pivotal axis of development. We watch every opportunity that arises in the sub-region to enhance our network and diversify.”

On the move

Fast-growing transport company Socatur is also playing a strategic role in Cameroon's modernization. Established in 2001, it operates a public transport network in Douala, the country's largest city with a population of around two million.

In the early days, it had a fleet of just 15 buses, but has grown exponentially and now operates around 100, all of them third generation. As part of its ambitious expansion program, Socatur's management is now looking to partner with Chinese



Jean Ernest Masséna Ngalle Bibehé,
president director general of Socatur

operators and build an assembly line for vehicle production. As well as reducing production costs, it would ease access to spare parts and technical assistance.

Jean Ernest Masséna Ngalle Bibehé, president director general of Socatur said: “We need 30 lines to cover the entire network of Douala, but to do so we need a fleet of 300 buses. This will take two or three years at least, but that would enable us to cover the entire city. “After this, we intend to deploy our services to other cities in Cameroon and serve as a focal point in the sub-region.”

The company, which is 67 percent privately owned, is a member of the International Association of Public Transports and the African Union of Public Transport.

“We have reinvented urban transportation. We contribute to improv-

ing the living conditions of the local populations, and facilitate urban mobility,” Ngalle Bibehé says.

“Today Socatur employs 300 people, it is an integrated center with 100 buses, including 40 in permanent operation, and the rest make up the technical storage. To operate a bus, you need between 6 and 8 people. So if you buy 100 buses, you will recruit 700 people. If you buy 300, you'll recruit about 3,000 people. In turn, these people support entire families with their wages, so the list of social benefits is long.”

“Our main target is primarily the most disadvantaged population, that is to say pupils, students, people on low incomes. We have an eminently social role to play, and believe that urban mass transportation in a city like Douala must grow, to develop the country.”

Expanding infrastructure

The fast pace of construction in Cameroon has called for robust standards and procedures to be drawn up. With its broad expertise, well-trained engineers and strong global network, Labogénie is the leading geotechnical research institute in this field and as such is tasked with quality control for structures such as dams, bridges and roads.

“We also deal with other activities, like the supervision of public works for new structures and upgrades, and the inspection of finished works, to verify compliance,” said Philippe Nouanga, general manager.

Meanwhile, Labogénie's counter-

part, Matgénie is responsible for the acquisition, maintenance, renewal and rental of equipment for the construction of all roads. In December 2011, it received brand new civil engineering materials thanks to Chinese cooperation, enabling its continued contribution to progress.

“We are working with several of the key ongoing projects,” said Niwa Long Othon, general manager.

Created in 2007, Cam Iron SA is the country's leading iron ore mining company. Ninety percent owned by Sundance Resources Ltd, the company plans to develop integrated mine, rail and port projects.

“The one thing that is missing in Cameroon is infrastructure,” Chairman Giulio Casello explained. “Our Mbalam project has the power to unlock the region and create much value locally as we propose to build rail and port infrastructure for the export of iron ore from the region.”

One of the best iron ore assets in Africa, the project aims to mine 35 million tons per annum of direct shipping ore-quality High Grade Hematite for 10 years at an estimated operating cost of \$21.2/ton. The second stage will see the continued 35 mpta of concentrate product from Itabirite for a further 15 years, at an ETO of \$40/ton.

The project, which is expected to last between 40 and 50 years, has a net present value of \$4 billion over 25 years with a payback period of between four and five years.

InFocus provided the story

Creolink: Setting the standard in service

Dynamic and ambitious, Creolink Communications is the industry pioneer setting the standard for innovation and excellence in Cameroon's emerging telecoms sector. Since its launch in 2001 by CEO Joseph Mbock, Creolink Communications has built a reputation for first class customer service and was the first telecoms company in sub-Saharan Africa to offer clients triple play services - telephone, television and Internet.

Incredible annual growth of 30 percent has allowed Creolink Communications to ring up substantial revenues and open 30 comfortable Cyberlink centers that give people broadband Internet access.

Given the outstanding success of its business model, it's no surprise to see Creolink Communi-

cations growing its reach outside the domestic market with a foray into Chad and the Central African Republic. Creolink Communications' young and vibrant 150-strong workforce is a key asset as are the knowledge, skill and experience of entrepreneur Mbock who worked in the US for several years.

“We are a young company, but have the maturity, execution skills and vision as to where we want to go,” he explains. “We did all of that through internal investment and we managed to grow all the company this way. We created our own market and are providing services no other company currently provides. The market is at its very beginning; Cameroon has 20 million people and penetration is only two percent so there are huge opportunities”



Joseph Mbock,
founder and CEO,
Creolink Communications



www.creolink.com



Camtel shines the light on ICT development

Chinese funding and know-how has brought this local telco to the fore in Central Africa

With impressive, state-of-the-art infrastructure that guarantees a good quality, efficient telecommunications service in Cameroon, the country's fixed-line telephony operator, Camtel is delighted to have China on board as a partner as it continues to modernize and expand.

Having brought a number of important technologies to the country, including digital transmission, Internet, CDMA, and GSM, the dynamic company has gone from strength to strength since it was inaugurated in September 1998. Today, the ambitious company employs more than 2,600 people, 40 percent of whom are women.

General Manager David Nkoto Emame spoke to InFocus about the culture in Cameroon and his plans for the company.

"The oral culture is traditionally very strong and peculiar to Africa, which explains why the mobile penetration rate has been staggering, in relation to the Inter-



David Nkoto Emame,
general manager of Camtel

have to tell you that if we had not established such cooperation, we would be in trouble. Together we have put in place a framework that we now follow. All the achievements of Camtel to date: the CTPhone, the national fiber-optic backbone, the Internet and so on, would have been impossible without cooperation with China.

panies, but also banks like Exim-bank. Camtel has found a reliable partner, and a strong ally in China.

What have been your major projects during 2012?

This year, we started to upgrade the telecommunications network by laying optical fiber from the SAT-3 submarine cable. Work on this will continue until 2013. We want to link the whole national territory with the optical fiber.

The first phase was to lay 3,200 kilometers. Today Cameroon has 5,500 kilometers in total, managed entirely by Camtel for the benefit of all users.

We will continue the work this year beyond the urban areas, to allow all users to have better access, and play our role on behalf of the state of Cameroon which has complete confidence in us.

In addition, Cameroon is in the heart of Central Africa, so we want to make it a hub in the sub-region. We have expanded our fiber optics to Chad, for example, which,



PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Camtel is rolling out thousands of kilometers of fiber-optic cable to improve telecommunications.

rather everything else that is necessary to perform. We also have a lot of litigation, many land disputes. This greatly impacts the company's cash flow. The optical fiber project is estimated to cost around 100 billion CFA.

How do you think cooperation with China has been a catalyst for the growth and development of Camtel?

Despite the difficulties, I can tell you again that without China, Camtel would not exist as it does today. We operate in a competitive environment alongside multinational companies that are developing strategies in various countries.

When they run a model, it has already been tested, so for them it's going extremely fast. Camtel does not have this strike power.

The real problem of Africa is infrastructure, and this is what we need to focus on. That's what we do at Camtel.

Cameroon now has 250,000 uni-

versity students, and when we see the infrastructures that host them, we say that we really need to do something.

We work on the digital university, on classroom sharing and on a project of equipping universities in computers.

Access to computers should be less expensive. In addition, Cameroon and Africa as a whole have a concern for content management. Even though you can access the web, there is no local content and no management policy of it.

This is another project for Camtel. We're working on it.

China can help in reaching this goal because it can provide a lot of material at lower costs, making it a strategic partner. How do you think China can help you expand beyond the borders of Cameroon?

The ambition is for Cameroon to become the hub of Central Africa,

thanks to Camtel, and my Chinese friends know this very well.

China wants Cameroon to be the pilot country in Africa to test their 3G technology, which is very good technology.

They are good partners. With hard work and perseverance, we've managed to achieve great things together.

To quote our head of state, "It is not enough just to do well, you have to let people know."

We will therefore continue our efforts and promote the face of Cameroon as a stable country with a leader who nourishes a great destiny for his nation.

InFocus provided the story

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All the achievements of Camtel today: the CTPhone, the national fibre-optic backbone, the Internet and so on, would have been impossible without cooperation with China."

DAVID NKOTO EMAME
GENERAL MANAGER, CAMTEL

net, for example, which is only just starting to get into the mindset," he said. "The latter is, however, a very promising area. In two years, the Internet has grown exponentially. On this component, Camtel is very present and intends to further reinforce its presence."

How important is Chinese cooperation within your development strategy?

We have been working with Chinese companies since 2005 and I

China has been for us an essential collaboration to start a new beginning that bears fruit, and whose future is combined in terms of hope and greatness.

And I must say that for 20 years, the first credits that our country achieved with China were for Camtel. We were given 100 billion CFA (\$0.91 billion) for various projects that we are implementing now.

I myself go very regularly to China and have got to know all the Chinese telecommunications com-

panies, which are now connected to the world.

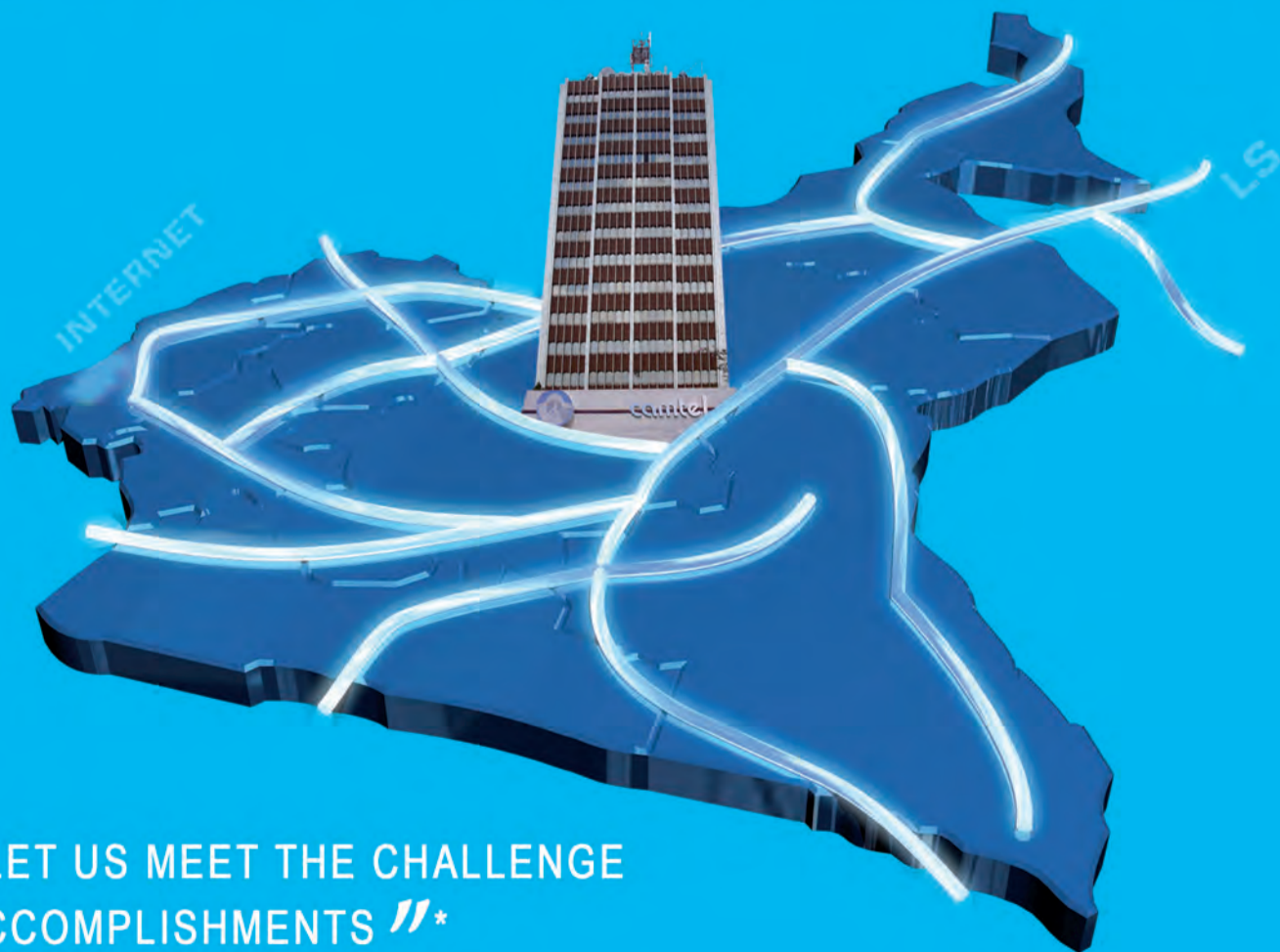
We will continue on this path with the Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea, and are determined to have multiple digital entry points.

What will you need to be able to achieve these high ambitions?

The hardest part is installing the infrastructure — installing the fiber is extremely expensive. It is not so much the meter of optical fibre, but

NATIONAL FIBRE OPTIC NETWORK

"... The deployment of the OPTICAL FIBRE by CAMTEL, with the backing of a Chinese company, is now completed. The optical fibre backbone will provide broadband Internet and other related facilities, especially in the areas of information, education and research..."*



http://www.camtel.cm

"TOGETHER, LET US MEET THE CHALLENGE OF MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS..."*

*His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic
Maroua, October 2011 and the message to the nation on 25 October 2011

... AND THE BEST IS STILL TO COME !

