

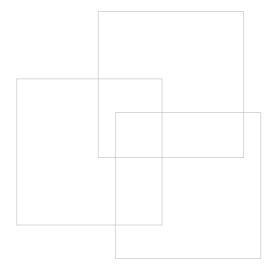






Cameroon

State of SKILLS



Cameroon

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The socioeconomic context

The population of Cameroon has been on the increase for several decades, albeit at a moderate pace.

In 2018, the population stood at an estimated 23.8 million inhabitants, with an estimated annual growth rate of 2.6% over the 2010-2018 period compared to 2.8% over the 1987-2005 period (BUCREP, 2010). Nevertheless, the demography of Cameroon has not yet started to transition, as fertility is still high. In 2014, the total fertility rate was estimated at 4.9 compared to 5.1 in 2011 (MICS, 2015). In addition, the population of Cameroon remains characterized by its extreme youth. The median age is 17.7, and 64.2% of the total population is below the age of 25 (MINSANTE, 2016). The education and training system is challenged by a high level of demand for schooling on the one hand and the issue of access to the labour market for school leavers on the other.

The economic performance of Cameroon has improved.

Since the beginning of the implementation of the Growth and Employment Strategy in 2010, Cameroon's economic performance has improved, despite a slowdown from 2016 onwards. Over the 2010-2018 period, real GDP averaged 4.6%, mainly driven by the service sector (59%) and industry (26%), whereas the primary sector, which is the main source of employment, contributed only 15% (MINEPAT, 2018).

However, this trend has had very little impact on people's living conditions and on the reduction in social inequalities, particularly in rural areas.

In 2014, the incidence of poverty was estimated at 37.5% nationally compared to 39.9% in 2007. In rural areas, poverty is even more acute, with more than half (56.8%) of the population living below the poverty line, compared to 8.9% in urban areas (ECAM, 2014). In addition, there has been an increase in inequalities between the various social categories over the 2007-2014 period, resulting in a 13% increase in the Gini index, which stood at 0.44 in 2014 against 0.39 in 2007.

In the field of education, Cameroon continues to perform well.

As a result of the strategies deployed for literacy and nonformal education, early childhood development, pre-school, primary and secondary education as well as vocational training, the literacy rate of the population aged 15-24 has improved from 73.4% in 2004 to 81.8% in 2011 (EDS-MICS, 2011). The introduction of free primary education has paid off, with a gross enrolment rate of 109% in 2018, a primary-school completion rate of 68.3% (MINEDUB, 2018), and a transition rate to secondary education of 66.5% in 2015, according to UNESCO.

Secondary and tertiary education enrolment rates are significantly lower than the rate recorded for primary education.

Despite the upward trend observed in enrolments in these levels of education, UNESCO statistics show that in 2016, while the gross and net enrolment rates in secondary education were 61.8% and 47.3% respectively, the gross enrolment rate in higher education was significantly lower (19.2%), with a lower rate for female students (16.9%) than for male students (21.4%).

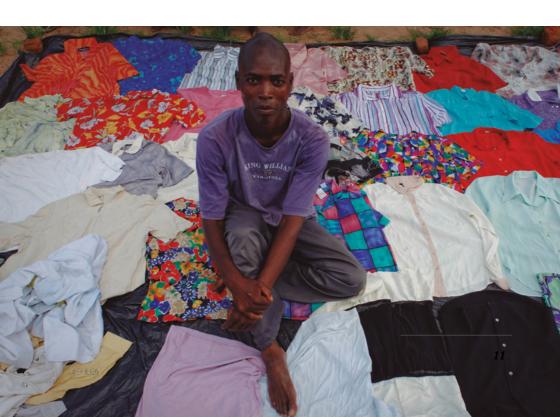
In addition, in 2016, only 23.9% of secondary school students were enrolled in technical and vocational education. Besides, almost 1 in 4 people has previously received vocational training in Cameroon, with this figure rising to 4 in 10 in urban areas against only 2 in 10 in rural areas (EESI, 2010).

The informal sector provides the bulk of job opportunities and vulnerable employment is widespread.

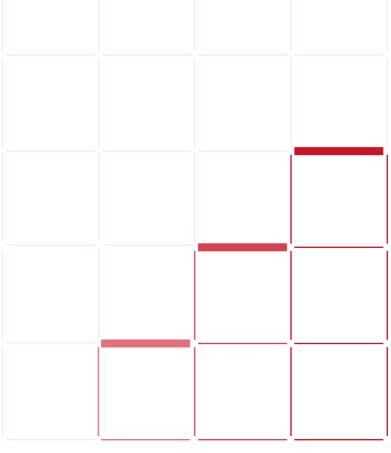
The participation rate of persons aged 15 to 64, as defined by the ILO, dropped from 76.2% in 2010 and 81.9% in 2007 to 72.1% in 2014 (ECAM, 2014). In 2014, the informal sector was the main source of employment for almost 9 out of 10 workers (89.5%). i.e. 86% of males and 93.2% of females. These informal jobs were distributed between the agricultural (48.6%) and non-agricultural (40.9%) sectors, whereas only 13.4% of the working population, i.e. 16.5% of males and 10.3% of females, were employed in industry. In the tertiary sector, employment increased by over 6 points over the 2007-2014 period to reach 36.2% in 2014, against 30% in 2007, with a very similar distribution of men (38.1% in 2014) to women (34.1%). Besides, most jobs are vulnerable: 30.1% of workers are farmers in the informal agricultural sector, 27.2% are own account workers in the informal non-agricultural sector, 14.6% are employees in the informal non-agricultural sector and 13.7% rely on the informal agricultural sector (ECAM, 2014).

To strengthen the industry and service sectors, education and training must be reinforced.

While the primary sector recruits mainly people with primary education or no education, the trade and service sectors mainly take on workers with secondary education and above. In 2014, for example, nearly 82% of the employed workers with higher education were working in the tertiary sector, while the primary sector employed 76.4% and 59.4% of workers without education and with primary schooling respectively. Unemployment remains essentially urban and almost 10.2% of the working population are affected in the broadest sense, compared to 2.7% in rural areas. In 2014, overall underemployment affected nearly 8 out of 10 workers (77.6%), women (86.9%) and rural areas (85.8%) (ECAM, 2014).



Development and employment policies



In 2009, Cameroon adopted a new Strategic Framework for Growth and Employment (SFGE) anchored in a long-term development vision, according to which the country's ambition is to become "an emerging and democratic country united in its diversity" by 2035. According to this development vision, Cameroon plans to become a middle income country with a high level of human development.

In the macroeconomic area, the vision envisages an acceleration of growth through massive investments in infrastructure and modernization of the production system while maintaining macroeconomic stability and developing policies to significantly improve the business climate and governance. This should facilitate access to the domestic and external sources of funding required for development. The vision focuses on the acceleration of investments as a driver of growth.

At the sectoral level, the vision envisages greater development in forestry, agriculture and fisheries and a move towards a more professional rural structure led by large and medium-sized farms. The structure of the economy should also evolve from predominantly primary activities (agriculture and mining) and informal tertiary activities to a position where the secondary sector is leading, the primary sector becomes intensive and the tertiary sector is professional, specialized and a source of decent jobs.

The SFGE forms part of an approach to strengthen subregional, regional and international integration and to seek trade opportunities in European, American and Asian markets through a policy of trade development and diversification.

In the field of education, Vision 2035 focuses on the following needs:

- To provide universal access to education, apprenticeships and vocational training;
- II. To improve the internal efficiency and the governance of the entire school and university system;
- III. To improve the value and relevance of vocational training in line with the demands of the labour market

Thus the vision aims, on the one hand, to strengthen the education and training of human resources in the fields of health, science and technologies in particular, and on the other hand, to strengthen the training of teachers for all levels of education and the training of engineers (ICT, civil engineering, the petrochemical industry, mining, process engineering, agronomists, animal industries, etc.). To improve the employability of young people, the SFGE aims to increase the proportion of students in science and technology courses at secondary level and higher from 5% to 30% by 2035.

In the field of employment, national policies are making youth employment a central focus of development policy. Thus, employment is viewed not only as the result of economic growth, but also and above all as a factor for driving and accelerating poverty reduction. In the SFGE, the issue of employment relies on three fundamental approaches: (i) increasing the supply of decent jobs; (ii) matching job demands with skills development offered; and (iii) improving the efficiency of the labour market. Accordingly, the SFGE highlights the need to promote a comprehensive framework conducive to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises as a source of new decent jobs.



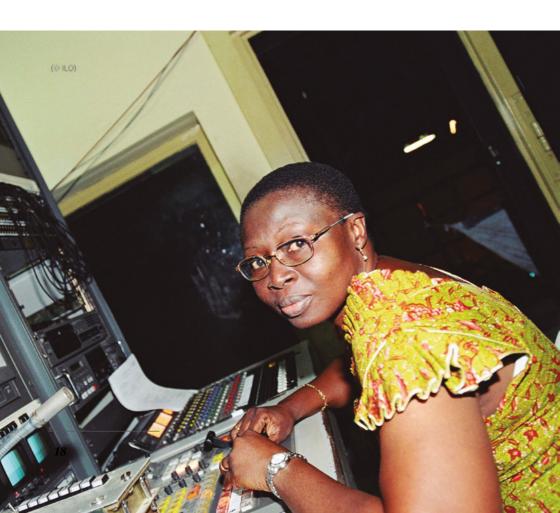
"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."



Constitution de la République du Cameroun

Article 26

The skills system in Cameroon



Reform policies

For a number of years now, Cameroon has undertaken reforms to restructure its skills development system by:

- I. Establishing the competency-based approach (CPA) as a teaching strategy in primary and secondary schools, through the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB) in 2007 and the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) in 2014;
- II. Implementing PARETFOP in 2014 through the MINESEC (Project to support the reform of technical and vocational education and training), in order to create the institutional conditions for an effective training system and improve the transition from training to employment;
- III. Adopting the LMD system (Licence (Bachelor)-Master-Doctorate) in 2008 in the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP) in order to introduce specialized training in certain fields on the one hand and to transform universities by giving a professional dimension to all (or a significant part) of the education streams on the other;

- IV. Implementing since 2013 through the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP) new training structures such as the Centres for Vocational Training (CVTs) which offer non-agricultural training in rural areas, the Centres for Rapid Vocational Training (CRVTs) and the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CVEs);
- V. Implementing the PADECE project by MINEFOP (Project to support the development of skills for growth and employment), which is scheduled to start in 2020 for a period of 5 years. Developed with the support of the World Bank, the project aims to increase the supply and quality of skills in line with labour market requirements, particularly in promising sectors such as construction and public works, the agricultural industry, digital technologies and energy, and to improve the governance and supervision of the skills development system in Cameroon, in order to achieve sustained and inclusive economic growth.

Governance

The education and training system in Cameroon is administered by several ministries, including:

- I. MINESEC supervises secondary schools of general and technical education and training schools for teachers of general and technical education;
- II. MINESUP is responsible for the advanced teacher training schools and technical education teachers, universities, higher education institutes for advanced technical training (BTS), Bachelors' degrees, universityissued technical undergraduate credentials (DUT), etc.;
- III. MINEFOP, in charge of post-primary schooling and vocational training. This ministry provides technical supervision to all public or private TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) providers in Cameroon, including CVEs, CRVTs, CVTs, craft and rural skills sections and home economics sections, etc.

Social dialogue

Cameroon has established institutional mechanisms to promote social dialogue on TVET between the government, employers' organizations and trade unions, namely:

- I. An inter-ministerial committee extended to the private sector, with additional participation from civil society stakeholders. Chaired by the Prime Minister, this committee, which meets twice a year, is a formal platform on skills development. It is also a consultation framework on actions required to develop TVET. However, the lack of regular meetings hinders the implementation and the integration of all the issues relevant to the TVET sub-sector.
- II. Partnership agreements between MINEFOP,
 MINESUP and employers' organizations, in particular
 GICAM, the Employers' Group of Cameroon, in
 order to include the business sector in the definition,
 design and development of formal vocational
 and non-formal training programmes. However,
 employers' organizations and trade unions play a
 limited role in the policy definition, governance
 and management of TVET in Cameroon



TVET Funding

Three main sources contribute to the funding of TVET: public funds (government and decentralized local authorities); private funding (private training structures, households, etc.), and other sources of funding (external financing, etc.). In 2018, total public expenditure on education and training amounted to 657.9 billion CFA Francs, i.e. 15.8% of the national budget, of which 55.6% was spent on secondary education and only 12.5% on higher education and vocational training (Loi des finances, 2018). However, the amounts allocated to technical secondary education and to technical and vocational university education are not available.

Given the relatively limited proportion of public funding, funds from private donors and households are often called upon to support skills development.

Technical and financial partners, including the World Bank, the South Korean Cooperation Agency KOICA, Austrian Cooperation and the French Development Agency also contribute to the funding of TVET.



Skills anticipation

The main institution responsible for skills anticipation in Cameroon is MINEFOP through the National Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training (ONEFOP). However, ONEFOP does not yet have an efficient mechanism to identify and anticipate future skills demand on the labour market and related occupations owing, among other things, to: (i) the weak national capacity to coordinate the activities of technical and financial partners and to develop training strategies able to anticipate future skills requirements, and (ii) the lack of an effective public-private partnership, on the one hand to develop and implement educational systems that are effective and efficient for the national economy as well as certification, and on the other hand to finance and implement technical education and vocational training programmes (MINEFOP, 2015).

Nevertheless, the effective implementation of the PADECE project and the GPEC programme for the anticipation of the skills demand of the labour market, - which MINEFOP has been considering for some years - could help to genuinely address the problem of anticipating skills requirements in Cameroon.



Skills development

For a number of years, the various ministries in charge of TVET in Cameroon have undertaken a vast reform programme on skills development, the impact of which is already reflected in the increased number of TVET students. Indeed, data from MINESEC's statistical annual report show that for the year 2015/2016, 343,597 pupils were enrolled in public technical and vocational secondary education (TVSE) including 117,601 girls (34.2%), against 145,516 pupils in 2011, including 53,450 girls (36%). By contrast, in 2015/2016, there were 1,238,891 students in public general secondary education, including 580,233 girls (46.8%). However, these statistics do not include formal vocational training courses monitored by MINEFOP. TVET includes formal training, nonformal or informal training, including apprenticeships and accelerated training in preparation for labour market entry.

Formal TVET programmes are delivered by institutions (public and private) reporting to MINESEC and MINESUP on the one hand, and by vocational training centres (VTCs) under MINEFOP on the other. TVET programmes are delivered in English and French and structured according to the training subsystem (UNESCO, 2015):

I. At the secondary level, TVET is provided in technical secondary schools and trains students in commercial and industrial occupations such as accounting, cabinetmaking, electronics, etc. In 2015/2016, there were 729 public TVSE institutions, against 670 in 2014/2015 (MINESEC, 2016).

In addition to these public TVSE institutions, there are also private institutions which tend to be smaller and offer a limited range of courses. In 2015/2016, there were 69 private TVSE institutions in Cameroon. Although the number of TVSE students in Cameroon has increased considerably since 2011, enrolments are still very low compared to those in general secondary education. Measures are required to reverse this trend if the education system is to respond effectively to labour market requirements.

- II. In higher education, technical and vocational training is primarily provided by private higher education institutes (PHEIs), but a few public universities include a technological and vocational education institution (TVEI). In 2017, 226 PHEIs and 41 TVEIs trained their students in technology, engineering, health and other professions.
- Vocational training is provided in public and private CVTs under the control of MINEFOP, as well as in institutions connected with the job market, in particular the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Crafts (CCIMC). According to the available data, more than 1600 structures, 87% of them private, provided vocational training in 2017 to nearly 46,000 students in subjects as varied as ICT, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and the timber industry, etc.

Besides, apprenticeships have long remained informal in Cameroon, mainly because of the lack of a strong legal framework to define the partnerships between businesses and training centres. However, the government has made progress by recognizing apprenticeships as a form of vocational training in Law No. 2018/010 of 18 July 2018, although the organizing guidelines have yet to be defined. Traditionally, apprenticeships in Cameroon have consisted of on-the-job training carried out by the informal sector. The existing literature shows that most workers in the informal sector (66.9%) learn or have learned a trade on their own or through hands-on practice; a similarly large proportion (24.4%) has been trained in small businesses, and only 5.3% of the employed workers have learned a trade in a TVET establishment (NGATHE, 2015).

Non-formal training is provided by various ministerial departments:

- The Ministry of Youth and Civic Education (MINJEC) has set up training programmes to help young people enter the labour market, such as the Support Program for Rural and Urban Youth (PAJER-U) and the Programme for Inclusion through the Manufacture of Sports Equipment (PIFMAS);
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) organizes apprenticeships in agricultural trades.

Skills recognition and quality assurance

At this point in time, qualifications do not refer to a general framework as in other countries (UNESCO, 2015). There is no TVET coordination platform in Cameroon to bring together all relevant ministries (MINESEC, MINESUP, MINEFOP etc.) to define the standards for the assessment, certification and accreditation of professional qualifications. Each ministry defines the assessment and certification standards for its own educational system through related structures.

The certification of vocational qualifications is the sole responsibility of MINEFOP, whose Department for Training and Vocational Guidance (DFOP) defines assessment and certification standards for vocational training. The certification process for vocational qualifications consists in organizing annual national examination sessions to assess the students on completion of their training in public and private vocational training centres.

Depending on the course, successful candidates obtain either a vocational qualification credential (DQP), a vocational qualification certificate or a specialized technician credential (DTS), which demonstrate a qualification and professional recognition at national level for a job specific to a branch or sector. MINEFOP does not have a system for recognizing professional credentials obtained abroad by immigrants. The equivalence and recognition system in place within MINESUP is more academic than professional in nature and applies to academic credentials obtained abroad by nationals.

In addition, the recognition of skills acquired informally occurs via two mechanisms set up respectively in MINESUP and MINEFOP, namely the recognition of prior learning and the validation of prior learning (RPL). This RPL mechanism is not yet operational in MINESUP, but it is functional in MINEFOP and is recognized by businesses.

It consists in national examinations held annually for people who have acquired qualifications in the workplace and who wish to have them recognized. However, it is still not well known amongst the general population, since in 2016, only 17 candidates were assessed during the RPL exams held in the fields of office and secretarial skills, electrical engineering and automotive repair. Of these candidates, only 9 (53%) passed the assessment.



The quality assurance system for the training, assessment and certification of the TVET system is implemented within MINESUP and MINEFOP. In MINESUP, it is supervised by the Quality Assurance Sub-Division, which is responsible for: (i) the development of curriculum standards, together with the National Standards Agency (ANOR); (ii) the development of standards for the assessment and certification of training institutions, teaching institutions, curricula, courses and training streams; (iii) the development of standards for academic and social infrastructure and teaching equipment.

At MINEFOP, the quality assurance system focuses on the delivery of training. It is the responsibility of the General Inspectorate of Training Courses (IGF), which is in charge, among other things, of (i) standardizing, classifying and reviewing the vocational training system and mechanisms for employment; (ii) developing the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of vocational training methods; (iii) implementing vocational training standards.

Social inclusion

In order to execute the social equity policy and to address the issue of social exclusion, the government has set up an institutional and operational mechanism to promote and protect socially vulnerable populations, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) under Decree No. 2011/408 of 9 December 2011 on the organization of the government.



However, access to formal TVET is still limited for most vulnerable people, including people with disabilities, migrants, rural workers, etc. Several factors can explain this situation:

- I. The relatively limited number of vocational training providers and their geographical concentration in urban areas;
- II. Entry requirements, which sometimes exclude young people who have not completed lower or upper secondary education;
- III. The costs of participating in vocational training, which are often very high in relation to the annual income of most households;
- IV. The lack of suitable teaching materials and equipment to meet the needs of people with a disability in particular.

Every year, MINEFOP offers vocational training scholarships to returning migrants as a priority, to facilitate their social and professional integration. In addition, as part of the Programme to support the entry or re-entry to the labour market of vulnerable people (PAIRPEV) which was set up by MINAS in collaboration with the National Employment Fund (FNE), non-formal programmes have been developed as an alternative for the training of vulnerable people such as street youth, people with disabilities, marginalised populations such as pygmies, and, soon, refugees.

In addition, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Families is developing training and funding activities for female business owners. The recent 2018 law on vocational training provides for special measures to be taken for the vocational training of people with disabilities.

Further, in order to address the challenges faced by young graduates without professional experience or qualifications, the government has set up programmes to facilitate the entry of school leavers to the job market. They include:

- the FNE's Graduate Employment Programme in urban areas, which aims to provide a qualification and practical experience to young university graduates without professional experience to facilitate their entry into the production system;
- the Programme to Support the Development of Rural Employment (PADER), which consists in providing young unemployed or underemployed people in rural and near-urban areas with training in modern farming methods, material and financial resources, as well as support for the management and sale of crops;
- PAJER-U, which aims to strengthen the technical and entrepreneurial skills of young people, graduates or not, and fund their micro-business, etc.

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Lifelong learning

In Cameroon, the continuing vocational training system is not sufficiently developed, although a cooperation partnership has been signed between GICAM and MINESUP to develop it. According to the 2012 Business Survey, only 4 out of 10 companies (39.1%) report having a staff training programme in place. This figure varies according to the activity sector. It stands at 31.8% for businesses in the primary sector and 42.4% in the tertiary sector. The fact that more companies in the tertiary sector have a training programme may be explained by the sector's technology and innovation requirements.

In addition, among businesses with a training programme, 46.4% report having trained or retrained at least one employee in 2011 (INS, 2014). The rate at which companies use training varies according to the sector of activity. This percentage is higher in service businesses (51.3%) than in those in the primary sector (INS, 2014).



Key challenges

The proclamation of the 2018 law on vocational training and the creation of the PADECE project reflect the government's commitment to truly address skills development in Cameroon. However, until these are fully implemented, the skills system in Cameroon continues to face significant challenges:

Fragmented TVET governance.

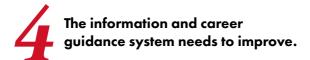
MINESEC, MINESUP and MINEFOP operate separately and there is little coordination of measures and regulations between the three levels. This has a negative impact on the quality of training offered because, on the one hand, it significantly hinders the State's ability to undertake genuine training reform, and on the other, it leads to conflicts between the administrative structures concerned by generating more competition, particularly in terms of budget allocations.

Limited choice of training opportunities.

There is insufficient focus in secondary and higher education on training related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and applied science, engineering and technology (ASET). Yet skills in these areas are essential to develop the national economy. The consequence is the shortage of skilled workers observed on the national labour market. In addition, training in the minor trades and entrepreneurship is not sufficiently factored into the formal TVET system. Nevertheless, given the informal nature of the economy of Cameroon and the scarcity of formal jobs, these training programs are important.

Insufficient material, financial and human resources.

TVET in Cameroon receives a small percentage of the national education and training budget. However, the sector needs to develop and improve in quality. In addition, the quantitative and qualitative shortage of teachers in TVET centres is fairly significant. This has led to the increased use of private sector professionals to train students. Additionally, TVET in Cameroon suffers from a lack of specialized equipment and teaching materials. All the above-mentioned shortcomings are having a negative impact on the quality of training.



Despite the establishment of the National Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training (ONEFOP), which is tasked with periodically monitoring the labour market situation and being aware of training requirements and supply, Cameroon does not have a proper system for information gathering, youth guidance and TVET management or a skills anticipation system, which are indeed essential to address the mismatch between training and employment that is currently observed in Cameroon.

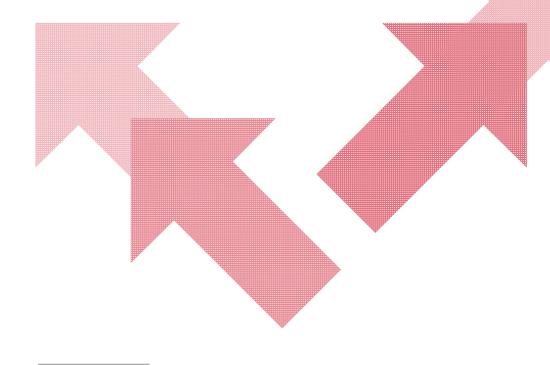
Lack of a national certification framework.

To date, Cameroon does not have a structure responsible for the recognition of formal and informal credentials. The ministries in charge of TVET each define their own training assessment and certification standards. This prevents students from easily transferring from one course to another within and between TVET.



The way forward

The main challenge for Cameroon is not so much the design of policies, but their implementation. As an example, the implementation instruments of the new law on vocational training enacted in July 2018 are still outstanding to this day, though the application of this law would significantly improve the TVET system in Cameroon.



The effective implementation of the PADECE project, which is supported by the World Bank and would contribute to the systemic improvement of skills development in Cameroon, also remains outstanding. In addition to the above measures, the TVET system could be improved with the implementation of actions on a smaller scale, such as:

1

The establishment of a consistent and unified framework for the management of TVET, similar to that in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This consists in setting up a single entity in charge of TVET, whose role includes coordinating training delivery and quality assurance on the one hand, and establishing qualification assessment and certification standards on the other. This entity would also provide a framework for collaboration between the government and the private sector to ensure their effective participation in the definition and development of training programmes.

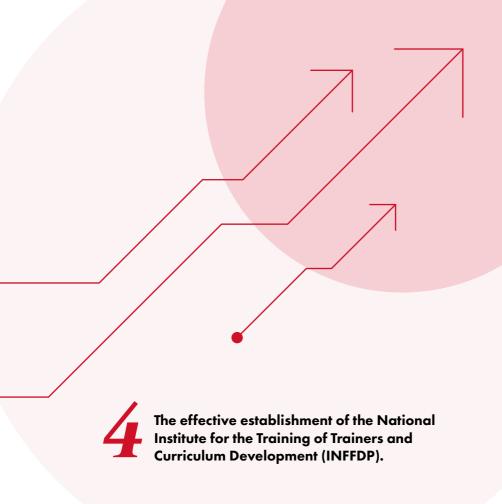
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The development of curricula using the competency-based approach.

The aim is to introduce strong curricula in secondary and higher education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and applied science, engineering and technology (ASET), but also in the infrastructure, hotel and tourism sectors, in particular to meet the very high indirect skills demand in the support occupations generated by structural projects.

An improved supply of guidance and training options by vocational training institutions.

Tripartite management of vocational training centres needs to be operational in order to improve the involvement of the private sector and workers' organisations in the definition of educational streams. In view of the scarcity of formal jobs and the predominance of the informal sector, it would also be necessary, on the one hand, to develop apprenticeship programmes for the minor trades in the informal sector to strengthen the skills of those working in this sector and thus to increase their income, and on the other hand, to include entrepreneurship more fully in the training curricula to instil a culture of entrepreneurship in students. Such measures would also provide vulnerable populations with access to the TVET system.



This project, which is supported by the Korean Cooperation Agency KOICA, has not started yet. However, since its mandate includes in particular the area of teacher development, the Institute will significantly help address the shortage of qualified trainers in CVTs.

Diversification of TVET funding sources.

This would involve, for example, a formal cost-sharing arrangement between the government and private sector companies as the main beneficiaries of TVET outputs.

Extension of work-based training.

The aim is to set up mechanisms to promote genuine work-based training, in particular by establishing a framework for close partnerships with businesses (through employers' organisations such as GICAM) and CCIMC, and to define the conditions for effective operation. According to the WB, this approach would suit the agri-food, cotton textile, palm oil and tourism sectors.

The implementation of a genuine skills anticipation system.

In collaboration with the private sector, the implementation of such a system would substantially address the issue of matching training and employment and help update the directory of jobs and trades in order to have an up-to-date skills profile of the country.

Subsidising TVET training costs.

This measure should facilitate the access of vulnerable populations, especially migrants, to training leading to qualifications to assist their social and professional inclusion in Cameroon.

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