

BUSINESS IN CAMEROON

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MAJOR PROJECTS - AGRICULTURE - ENERGY - MINING - INDUSTRY - SERVICES - FINANCE

Minim Martap
**«It might be the best
bauxite ever at the
moment»**



The necessary
reform of
Cameroonian
public firms



In search of
«fake wages,
fake bonuses
and fake
pensions»

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**Yasmine Bahri-Domon,
directrice de la publication**



Let's imagine for a moment...

What would happen if, in the wake of a movement of demands by lawyers or teachers, the National Liberation Front of Corsica had decided to engage in an armed fight against the "French occupier"?

Imagine that, suddenly, the Corsican autonomists forbid children to attend the republican school, threaten to kill teachers who go to school, extort money from shopkeepers, shoot citizens who go to vote, behead state representatives, plant bombs in a peaceful demonstration by women...

Would stakeholders be called upon to engage in dialogue? Would the French President be publicly called to moderation? Would NGOs and the media try to justify these acts of war by the excessive centralism of the French republic? Would the same means be mobilized to try to discredit the French order-keeping forces?

And what would happen if the leaders of this armed rebellion openly signed deals for oil exploration in Corsican waters? Would the authorities of the foreign countries hosting them let them succeed, raise funds, call for civil war, and broadcast their calls for crime or for the murder of Mr Macron on social media?

In such a context, the ire of Cameroonian authorities towards several NGOs which show guilty indulgence towards those whom they call "the alleged separatists" is justifiable. While these NGOs are slow to condemn the crime perpetrators, they rush to severely track down and expose any unfortunate behavior by the forces of order or collateral damage to reinforce their terrible prejudices against Africa and its legitimate leaders.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

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COMPANY OF THE MONTH

SABC INVESTS XAF12 BILLION IN NEW PRODUCTION LINE IN DOUALA



On February 26, 2020, the Minister of Industry Dodo Ndocke inaugurated a new production line at SABC's plant located at Ndokoti, Douala.

This XAF12 billion investment included, the leader of the Cameroonian brewery market now has 19 production lines, official sources indicate. The newly inaugurated line has an hourly production capacity of 45,000 60 and 65 Cl bottles.

Internal sources reveal that the line, built within 6 months, started production since December 2019. "The

production line stems from the will of the SABC group's top management to provide modern and efficient tools to Brasseries du Cameroun. This is aimed at boosting productivity, on one hand, and meeting the group's new requirements in terms of performance and innovation on the other," SABC group says.

Indeed, this new investment is part of a XAF65 billion 3-year strategic investment plan initiated by the brewery group in 2017. The plan is aimed at modernizing the facilities to make them more efficient.

SABC, leader of Cameroon's brewery market, also owns Société des Eaux minérales du Cameroun (Semc) and Société camerounaise de verrerie (Socaver). It employs 3,000 people and provides more than 100,000 indirect jobs. It also has 2,900 sub-contractors and local distributors, 9 international-standard plants, 19 production lines, and 40 distribution warehouses. Its activity also impacts the lives of more than 6,000 farmers in the country.

Brice R. Mbodiam



MONTHLY STATISTICS

XAF2,000 billion

CEMAC countries have a yearly structural food deficit of about XAF2,000 billion. This was revealed by Daniel Ona Ondo, President of the CEMAC Commission while launching the session of the regional committee that identifies products to be granted regional free circulation rights.

This revelation seems like a formal invitation for economic operators to massively invest in the retailing sector because of the existing opportunities. It also informs about the opportunities in intra-community trade within CEMAC (officially estimated at 3% opposed to 15% for the UEMOA).

30%

In January 2020, 7.8 million people were connected to the internet in Cameroon, according to a report published by Hootsuite and We Are Social, two organizations that monitor internet and social media feed. With that number of users, the internet penetration rate reached 30% in the country in January 2020.

According to the same source, year over year, there is a 7.8% (570,000 new users) increase in the use of the internet in Cameroon.

That increase was driven by a high mobile penetration rate since most users browse the internet using smartphones, the report indicates.

50 000 tons

Cameroon's ambition, in the framework of its national strategy for the promotion and development of the cashew sector, is to reach a production of 50,000 tons in 2025. This was revealed by Gabriel Mbairrobe (photo), the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, on February 3, during the annual conference of heads of central and decentralized services of his ministerial department.

But before this deadline, Cameroon intends to make itself known on the international cashew nut market by 2023, the official indicated.

210

Comité régional de l'origine, CEMAC's institution which determines the country of origin of products to be granted free circulation rights in the community, started a session on February 20, 2020, in Douala.

Out of the 304 products being assessed, 210 were submitted by 15 Cameroonian companies (25 companies submitted products for this reviewing meeting). The 15 companies operate in various sectors including construction, cosmetics, and agribusiness, official sources indicate.



CAMEROON AND ITS FISCAL BURDENING PUBLIC COMPANIES

The government's portfolio in the productive sector is officially estimated at 127 companies and other institutions. According to the Ministry of Finance, these entities provide about 40,000 jobs. As such, they are an important tool for job creation and even for the development of the national economy.

However, a report (focused on Cameroon's economy) published in September 2013, by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) informs that most of these state-owned companies and public institutions perform rather poorly.

For instance, during the February 25, 2016, cabinet council held in Yaoundé, it was revealed that the main problems encountered by state

companies owned by Cameroon were non-compliance with budgetary discipline, failure to control operating costs, lack of various steering tools, poor governance and increased dependence on state subsidies. Since 2006, all these problems have created scandals that had led many general directors of companies to prison.

Apart from the poor governance and lack of competitiveness, which seem to be the trademark of state-owned companies in Cameroon, there is a real financing problem.

Faced with the ever-increasing fund solicitations from state-owned companies, Cameroon is planning to stop subsidizing these companies, which are more like money pits instead of the productive structures they are

supposed to be. Instead of providing the government with dividends it should expect, these companies are rather always requiring financial support.

Due to that fact, over the years, the government has multiplied initiatives to encourage public enterprises to try and raise financing in capital markets and from some international investors. However, the companies seem to prefer government subsidies to the capital markets. Currently, the government fears the unproductive companies, with abysmal debts, could become a real fiscal burden in the long term. Illustrations!

Brice R. Mbodiam

Cameroon: Fiscal consolidation efforts threatened by XAF2,624 billion debt owed by state-owned companies



According to a country profile published on October 10, 2019, by the rating agency Moody's, the debt of state-owned companies in Cameroon constitute a threat to fiscal consolidation efforts. The document, based on 2016 indicators, states that the debt of these entities (the National Refining Company [Sonara] excluded), was about 8.2% of that year's GDP. According to government data, this ratio reached 13.5% of GDP at end 2017, Sonara's debt being included this time.

While assessing the volume of assistance to be provided to public enterprises in 2019, the government estimated the overall debt of 37 public or publicly owned enterprises (excluding the numerous public institutions) at more than XAF2,624.4 billion (about \$4.7 billion) in 2017. That year, the country's GDP was estimated at \$34.8 billion. Sonara, Camtel, and Camwater were among the top three indebted public enterprises with respective debts of XAF763.2 billion, XAF

554.5 billion and XAF352.4 billion at the end of 2017. The other public enterprises that closed this top five were the Electricity Development Corporation (XAF140.4 billion) and Sodecoton (XAF113.1 billion). The problem is not their indebtedness but the difficulties encountered by these companies in generating sufficient income to repay their debts.

The typical case of Sonara and Camtel

Sonara benefited from a significant portion of the \$750 million Eurobond issued in 2015 by the government. It is currently being repaid. It also obtained several credit lines from international and local banks. In April 2019, the company borrowed \$160 million from a petroleum trader before being hit by a fire in May 2019. It is hard to imagine how Sonara, already structurally in deficit, could repay its debt. The current shutdown of its operations will further weigh on the external deficit, due to the need to continue to satisfy local demand for petroleum products, which

is crucial to economic stability. For Camtel, unlike Sonara (whose capital is shared by the government, para-public entities and the private sector), it is fully-owned by the government. Due to that fact, the government's budget is fully exposed to its debt. The company massively borrowed, from Exim Bank China notably, for large-scale projects. The most important of those projects is the SAIL (cable system between Cameroon and Brazil) whose benefits are not yet visible. On top of that, at end 2017, the company's debts rose to over XAF409

billion FCFA (more than 4 times of its turnover).

The Presidency of the Republic has taken strong measures and paved the way for a partial privatization of the structure. Information not yet officially confirmed suggests that this could benefit Huawei, which is owed a substantial part of the company's debts.

In the framework of its economic and financial programme with the IMF, Cameroon has already taken some measures to reduce its state-owned companies' debts.

Public companies' short-term debt reached 128% of combined sales in 2018



Only 27% of public enterprises *"have a balanced operation"* while the majority is in deficit with a high level of indebtedness, according to the Technical Commission for the Rehabilitation of Public and Para

public companies (CTR). The state body reveals that as of 31 January 2018, *"the short-term debts"* of these public entities *"represent 128% of the combined turnover, albeit down compared to 2017, when*

debt represented 144% of turnover."

This constitutes a major budgetary risk for the State, CTR says.

In detail, we learn, more than 70% of this debt is carried by companies active in oil and gas, post and telecom, and water sectors.

Oil and gas public companies bear the heaviest burden with 27.6% of debt, and the National Refining Company (Sonara) tops the list. It should be noted that Sonara's debt level has always been a source of concern for both the Treasury and the local banking sector.

The post and communications sector comes second with 23.3% of debt; a situation due to the heavy indebtedness of the incumbent telecoms operator, Camtel, to its partners, notably the Chinese equipment manufacturer Huawei. Meanwhile, the water sector recorded 19.6% of the total debt of public companies at 31 December 2018.

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The burden of personnel costs on State companies

In 90% of Cameroonian public enterprises, personnel costs exceed 30% of the annual turnover, the public body in charge of the Rehabilitation of Public and Para public companies found.

In some cases, CTR says, these expenses are “above 70%” of the companies’ turnover, leaving no room for optimizing operations or financing investments.

This bad personnel costs to turnover ratio “results in the accumulation of debts and the non-renewal of aging

equipment, and most of all it hampers the competitiveness” of these companies, “despite the significant support provided by the State in the framework of plan agreements.» A plan agreement is a deal the government signs with a struggling state company in order to revive it and make it more competitive.

Before the deal is signed, the partners should first identify the operations which, if carried out successfully, should boost the company’s development; then the government

generally finances the most important, costly and urgent operations. Officially, in 2018-2019, the government injected CFA73.4 billion into 15 public companies, within the framework of plan agreements. As at 31 December 2018, a bit over CFA45 billion had been effectively disbursed by the Treasury, according to a report by the Technical Commission for the Rehabilitation of Public and Para public companies.

Cameroon sets new measures to improve the management of public companies and institutions

In a circular signed on December 31, 2019, the Minister of Finance, Louis Paul Motaze (photo), prescribed special monitoring of the Program-oriented Budgeting in public institutions in Cameroon.

The official indicated that special emphasis should be placed on the harmonization of formats for the presentation of budgets of public institutions, their annual performance reports as well as their administrative and employment accounts. The transmission, by public establishments, of their administrative accounts for the financial year 2019 to the Minister in charge of Finance must be made no later than July 30, 2020.

Furthermore, the requirement that the annual budgets and investment plans of the said establishments, accompanied by a statement of personnel, the debt situation, and an internal clearance plan, be trans-



mitted to the Minister in charge of Finance by 15 January at the latest, is maintained.

“Any request for funding, tax relief, loans or government approval by state-owned companies, private companies with minority public participation and public institutions, is subject to the transmission to the

Budget Directorate of the certified financial statements, the auditor reports, resolutions, and deliberations by applicants’ corporate bodies and the administrative accounts (depending on the situation) of the due financial year,” Louis Paul Motaze stresses.

James Durrant

“WE ARE BUILDING A BAUXITE MINE IN CAMEROON”

James Durrant, Head of exploration and exploitation at the Minim Martap and Ngaoundal bauxite deposit, which could transform Cameroon into the world leading bauxite producer, recently visited the country. During the visit, he was interviewed by *Business in Cameroon*, with which he discussed every detail of the project.

On July 11, 2018, Camalco, the subsidiary of the Australian Junior Mining Company Canyon Resources, was granted three exploration licenses for the Minim Martap and Ngaoundal bauxite deposits. What progress have you made so far on these sites?

Camalco secured the tenements in July 2018 and was granted a 3-year exploration license. The exploration license detailed obligations to progress the Pro-

ject through exploration and into engineering. During 2019, Camalco delivered a very large and high-grade resource upgrade on the Project. This was completed within the first year of the 3 term and was achieved due to the high quality of work done by the Camalco local Cameroonian technical team on the project site.

Immediately following the resource upgrade the Camalco team began the engineering design and development phase

of the Minim Martap Project development. Concurrent to the engineering development we continue to increase our understanding of the resource though additional drilling and on-site investigation programmes. These additional works will allow us to take the Project status from Resource to Reserve, the highest level of deposit classification.

Alongside all of this we have begun the environmental and social assessments, known as

ESIA studies, for the project. This is a key component and initially seeks to understand the baseline social and environmental conditions and then integrates designs and management measures into the Project development planning to minimise adverse effects and maximise the benefits of the Project to the local population of the Adamawa region.

The engineering, resource definition and ESIA activities are not only essential to the successful development of the project, but are obligations under Cameroon and international law. Camalco is committed to developing the Minim Martap Project in a sustainable manner that complies with all laws and obligations, but also provides development and opportunities to local communities.

On 17 September 2018, Camalco launched the «last phase of research» on the Minim Martap-Ngaoundal project. What does this phase actually involve?

The last phase of research refers to the final stage of drilling and studies that will allow Camalco to start construction of the Minim Martap Project.

As with all mining projects, it is the resources in the ground that counts, but it is also vital to design solutions that allow the bauxite to be mined and processed in Cameroon and exported in a profitable and sustainable way that will ensure that Minim Martap Project will be opera-

ting for many decades in the future.

Since obtaining the non-renewable licences, what results have exploration works yielded?

Camalco delivered an internationally recognised mineral resource upgrade in mid-2019, having had the exploration license for only 1 year. This is incredibly quick and we must thank our employees, the communities and the government for their support in allowing us to progress the project and receive these results. The results were very positive and gives Camalco great confidence that the Minim Martap Project will be a successful long-term Project for Cameroon.

Now that the resource is understood, the engineering, mining and environmental and social phases take priority. Typically engineering includes a series of detailed assessments – including, from mining to shipping, from the number of trains to the number of people, from operating systems to environmental support systems. This is a very large work program and one that the whole team is currently focused on.

Camalco is on target to complete all of the studies well under the required 3 years time frame.

What challenges have you faced in the framework of this project?

The Minim Martap Project re-

source has been demonstrated to be exceptionally high quality, possibly the best quality known bauxite in the world. The deposit, however, is a long way inland and critical to the success of the project is working with the Government and Camrail to successfully design a solution for the bauxite to be transported on the existing rail network. The Camalco team has engaged a wide range of international experts to help work out the concept of operations for the rail operations which will be presented to Camrail in the near future.

The Minim Martap Project is located a long way from the coast and the logistics for the Project are the largest challenges faced by Camalco. Based on our detailed work completed to date, we are very confident that we will have a successful solution for the transport and beneficiation of the bauxite that will work for our logistics partners and the State and people of Cameroon.

Before your arrival, and after several years of exploration and negotiations, the American-Indo-Emirati consortium, Cameroon Alumina (CAL), was unable to conclude an investment agreement on this mining project with the State of Cameroon. What are the possible scenarios at the end of your 3-year contract with the State of Cameroon?

The current engineering and



"The limiting factor in the region is the capacity of the rail infrastructure"

study phase of the project is designed to finalise the operational details of the Project and from the results of these studies Camalco will be able to finalise an investment agreement with the State of Cameroon. The investment case is described by presenting an engineering report called the bankable feasibility study (BFS). The BFS

needs to show the key outcomes of the studies that comply with Cameroon laws and international mining conventions. A key focus of these studies, in addition to proving the long-term commercial viability of the Project, is the positive impacts the Project will bring across all sections of Cameroon society via investment, skilled employ-

ment opportunities, rail and transport corridor upgrades as well as revenue to the State.

60 years after its independence, Cameroon, which has a significant mining potential, still waits for the construction of its first industrial mine; despite the arrival of many junior miners



We are “very confident about the very high quality of the Minim Martap and Ngaoundal bauxite”

like yours. What makes you different from other mining companies that come to Cameroon?

The mining business is a very difficult business. It involves very large sums of money, long periods of time and a continuously changing investment, competitive and political landscape.

Camalco is approaching the development of the Minim Martap Project in a staged or phased

development process to ensure that we can start operations in as short a timeframe as possible and then increase the scale of the Project over time.

We, like the people of Cameroon, are anxious and focussed on having the Project in operation as quickly as possible and then remaining in operation for the many decades in the future.

Based on several examples in Africa, and Cameroon in

particular, junior miners are increasingly accused of applying for mining licences, just to speculate on stock exchanges and not out of real interest. What is your opinion regarding this claim?

We are very confident that Camalco has demonstrated through our work completed on the Minim Martap and Ngaoundal Projects over the last 18 months that we are not speculating on the Project, we



"Camalco has demonstrated through our work completed on the Minim Martap and Ngaoundal Projects over the last 18 months that we are not speculating on the Project"

are building a bauxite mine in Cameroon. Camalco has focused on employing and offering opportunities to skilled and talented Cameroonian mining professionals and we are going to build a long term and successful Project in this country. Junior mining companies have sometimes, deservedly so, received a bad reputation throughout Africa. Camalco would ask to be judged by our actions

over the last 18 months and the support and commitment of the Cameroonian Camalco team based on the camp near the town of Bobodji and the community surrounding our operations in the Adamawa.

At Canyon Resources, there has been much more talk in the last two years about the Minim Martap and Ngaoundal project, but very little has been said about the Birsok

and Mandoum licenses which you fully own since the exit of Altus Strategies in October 2018. What are your plans for these other two bauxite deposits?

The Birsok and Mandoum deposits are minor bauxite deposits that are located near to the Minim Martap deposit. The limiting factor in the region is the capacity of the rail infrastructure. Camalco plans to incorporate



"Camalco is committed to developing the Minim Martap Project in a sustainable manner that complies with all laws and obligations, but also provides development and opportunities to local communities".

the Birsok deposit into the long-term mining plan for the Project and improve the capacity of the rail line by working with Camrail (Cameroon Railways) on staged rail upgrades over time.

Apart from the aforementioned bauxite deposits, all of which are located in the Adamaoua region, Cameroon has another in Fongo Tongo, in the western region. Is it also of some interest to Canyon Resources?

Camalco is 100% focused on developing the Minim Martap

and Ngaoundal deposits in Cameroon.

Finally, what makes Canyon Resources run so much for Cameroonian bauxite?

The Minim Martap and Ngouandou together are a world-class bauxite deposit and the world is currently looking for high quality bauxite to support the growing alumina and aluminium industries.

We are competing against similar high quality bauxite deposits in Guinea Conakry, but Camalco is very confident that the very high quality of the Minim

Martap and Ngaoundal bauxite, the hard work of all of our team, that we will deliver a successful and long term mining and industrialised project for Cameroon and all stakeholders in the Project.

Camalco believes in the quality of the Minim Martap Project, the skills of our team in Cameroon, the fundamental long-term requirements of the global aluminium industry and the ability of Cameroon and Camalco to make the Project a success.

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Cameroon launches vast programme to service 320 water abstraction devices

Forty years ago, to facilitate access to drinking water for its populations (in rural areas notably), Cameroon launched the project Scanwater. The project consisted of the construction of water abstraction devices in some localities, to supply drinking water. After years of good services, these devices went out of use due to a lack

of maintenance. The government launched a vast rehabilitation programme to service them, according to official sources.

The first rehabilitation in the framework of the programme was launched in Njoré, in the Centre region. On 26 February 2020, the Minister of Water and Energy, Gaston

Eloundou Essomba, received the very first rehabilitated water abstraction device.

This device, which is now in good working condition, will provide drinking water to more than 1,800 people who were previously exposed to waterborne diseases.

INS forecasts 2% inflation rate in 2020, down from 2.5% in 2019

his year, inflation could drop from 2.5% in 2019 to 2.0%, the National Institute for Statistics (INS) of Cameroon forecasts.

The institute based its forecast on favorable climatic conditions, improvement of security conditions in the crisis regions (Northwest, Southwest and the Far-North) and the absence of internal or external shocks.

According to the institute, the special status granted to the Northwest and Southwest in 2019, and the various easing measures issued during the great National dialogue should improve the security situation and favour the resumption of economic activities. That resumption will boost the supply of markets, increase the offer of goods and services in the regions.

In addition, INS informs, the various incentives offered by the government to companies willing to establish in economically deprived areas could also boost production in the crisis zones. *"The exit duties provided by the 2020 finance law for the exportation*



of some local products (rice, raw palm oil, sorghum, millet, kola nut, "Eru/Okok", etc.) will surely stifle their exports so as to ensure a better supply in local markets," INS points out.

On the other hand, the INS notes, the prices of some imported products should rise in 2020 due to the application of the 5%-50% taxes on them. The products concerned are beauty products, cigarettes, motorcycles with a cylinder capacity exceeding 250 cm³, hairs, wigs, wools, beards,

eyebrows, eyelashes, wicks and textile products produced for the creation of wigs and similar hair products, cocoa-free sweets as well as chocolates and other high-cocoa concentration products.

The INS also fears an increase in fish prices due to the government's decision, in early February 2020, to ban the importation of fresh and frozen fishes from China. This ban is issued as a prevention against the Coronavirus outbreak.

3,336 teachers received XAF1.5 bln of undue salary adjustments over the 2012-2018 period



In Cameroon, 3,366 teachers under the Ministry of secondary education collected XAF1.59 billion of undue salary adjustments over the 2012-2018 period. This is revealed by the General Directorate of the Budget, which posted the results of the task force set up to verify (and require refund if necessary) the salary adjustment of teachers under the Ministry of Secondary Education.

The amounts received by the teachers vary between XAF30,000 and XAF10 million. Indeed, some teachers who should normally receive XAF14 million as salary adjustments received XAF25 million instead. Following the discovery, the General Directorate sent claim for refund to the teachers concerned. This verification is part of Coppe, the physical counting operation

launched by Cameroon in April 2018. Thanks to Coppe, Cameroon identified and removed 10,000 fictitious public servants from its payroll saving XAF30 billion in 2019. The servants removed were either absent from their working posts, dead but not declared or have resigned.

2020 legislative election : Constitutional court cancels elections in 11 constituencies in the North-West and South-West regions

On 25 February, the Constitutional Council annulled the parliamentary elections of 9 February in 11 constituencies in the North-West and South-West regions.

These are the constituencies of Menchum-North, Bui-West, Mezam-South, Bui-South, Bui-Centre, Mezam-Centre, Momo-East, Menchum-South, Momo-West, Mezam-North and Lebialem. The Council's decision followed appeals lodged by the Social

Democratic Front (SDF). According to the SDF, the elections were not conducted in some constituencies due to insecurity.

The SDF also accused Elections Cameroon (ElecCam), the body in charge of organizing the elections, of «violating the electoral code by grouping several polling stations in polling centres.» Because of these groupings, it was hard for some voters to identify their polling stations. ElecCam, to defend the grouping,

argued that because of the security requirements imposed in these two English-speaking regions of Cameroon, new polling stations were instead created so that voters would vote in peace, far from reprisals by separatists.

This argument was not sufficient to convince judges of the constitutional council. ElecCam now has between 20 and 40 days to organize partial elections.

End frauds and manipulations that usually occur at Cenadi, Louis Paul Motaze asks new officials



Last February 21, in Yaoundé, officials newly appointed at the Centre national de développement de l'informatique (Cenadi), which processes public servants' salaries, were inaugurated by the Minister of Finance Louis Paul Motaze. During the Ceremony, Louis Paul Motaze asked the newly appointed officials to end the various fraud and manipulations frequently observed at the Cenadi. These are namely

“undue salaries, undue promotions and pensions that, unfortunately, increase the state's budget.” For many years now, Cenadi has been the center of numerous fraudulent practices that costs the public treasury many billions every year. After many payroll sanitation operations, the government launched COPPE, a physical counting operation, in 2018. Thanks to this operation, it identified and removed more than 10,000 ficti-

tious public servants from its payroll. According to the Ministry of Finance, the savings amounted to about XAF30 billion yearly. In addition, 7,800 former servants have recently been invited to show proof of their disability and reversionary pensions. They are suspected of unduly receiving such pensions.

Cameroon to elaborate strategy to involve women in fight against maritime crimes

In the coming weeks, the Ministry of Transport will develop a strategy to involve women in the fight against maritime crimes. This is the result of negotiations led by the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC) for Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea. Indeed the Minister of Transport Ernest Massena Ngalle Bibehé and Alexandra Amling, a consultant for this center, met on February 24, in Yaoundé, to discuss the impacts of

the gender approach in the fight against maritime crime. During the meeting, it was revealed that Cameroon has been taking all the necessary steps to involve women in the maritime sector through training and professional integration. However, the Minister of Transport confessed, «as far as maritime crime is concerned, women are barely involved.» Nevertheless, the French Navy, which supports the Ministry

of Transport in terms of security, ensures the protection of women who transport goods by sea. Let's note that the ICC is the body in charge of strengthening activities oriented towards cooperation, coordination, pooling, interoperability of systems as well as the implementation of the regional strategy on security and safety within the common maritime space in Central and West Africa.

BNCRF dismantles contraband network in Douala



In mid-February, fraud repression agency BNCRF conducted a lightning raid in Douala. During the raid, boxes of "Château Barreyres" branded wines of suspicious origin (photo) were seized. Part of those were presented to the media. *"It turns out that the wine in question did not come from the company BVS, which has exclusive distribution rights for this brand in Cameroon. The warehouses of this marketing area have been sealed for selling contraband*

products," the BNCRF indicates. In the framework of the raid, a network that distributes adulterated whiskeys was also discovered in the Bonamoussadi district. "The alleged trafficker was about to make a delivery of Chivas (12 and 18-year-old) and Jack Daniels whiskeys, stamped with fake labels, to a local snack bar. Following a denunciation by the manager of this establishment, BNCRF officers also seized these liquors, which represent a great danger to the

health of consumers," *the repression agency says. An investigation was therefore opened in order to dismantle the entire manufacturing process of these various "deadly whiskeys."* According to the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Handicrafts (Ccima), smuggling, counterfeiting, and illicit trade activities in Cameroon cause losses estimated at XAF255 billion every year.

FINANCE

Ministry of Finance plans to initiate SMEs to crowdfunding

On February 20, the Ministry of Finance will organize a national workshop on the theme “Crowdfunding: Participatory financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs)” in Douala.

According to the organizing committee, the aim is to provide information on how this type of funding works. They will also present the opportunities and advantages offered by crowdfunding and share the experience of local start-ups and project holders who have had the opportunity to use this type of financing. In addition, the main pitfalls and key success factors for the implementation of a national policy for the development of this type of financing will be identified.

According to rare data produced by the Bank of Central African States (Beac), the annualized growth rate of the amounts raised by Cameroonians on the Kiva crowdfunding site



(XAF1.1 billion) was 42.8% between June and September 2017. “At this rate, the total funds raised by Cameroon on this platform could be multiplied by 17 by 2025,” the Beac projects.

Africa currently accounts for only 0.1% of global crowdfunding activity. South Africa, Egypt, and Nigeria dominate the continental market while Cameroon ranks only 18th.

Gabon and Safacam’s bonds get listed on the BVMAC

Today, Feb 21, two bonds issued in the Central African region last year were listed on the Unified Stock Exchange of Central Africa (BVMAC), the stock exchange announces. The first is Gabon’s 2019-2024 bond, with an interest rate of 6.25% thanks to which the country raised XAF126 billion in Q4-2019. Initially set at XAF100 billion, the envelope requested by Gabon was revised upwards following authorization by

the financial market regulator, after investors oversubscribed to that bond.

The second bond listed is that of *Société Africaine Forestière et Agricole du Cameroun* (Safacam) in Cameroon. Though this operation was conducted discreetly, Business in Cameroon learned from sources close to the Central African Unified Stock Exchange that it was arranged in late 2019 by Sogebourse, the

brokerage firm of Société Générale Cameroon.

According to our sources, Safacam, an agro-industrial unit that produces palm oil and rubber in the Littoral region of Cameroon, raised XAF2 billion during the operation.

The arrival of these two bonds on the BVMAC now allows their holders to trade on the secondary market of the Unified Stock Exchange of the Central African region.

British firm The First Group eyes both investors and investment opportunities in the Cameroonian real estate sector

On February 19, 2020, in Yaoundé, British firm The First Group's executives presented investment opportunities in the real estate sector in Dubai to Cameroonian economic operators.

According to official sources, this presentation was aimed at wooing Cameroonian investors into acquiring assets in The First Group's real estate projects in Dubai (construction of high-end infrastructure or luxury residential properties namely). In addition to seeking partnerships with Cameroonian investors for

investments in the United Arab Emirates, The First Group could also transfer its Dubai investment model to Cameroon. This is at least the dream of Mohamadou Dabo, president of the Moda Group and representative of The First Group in Cameroon.

"After working with The First Group in Dubai, we thought there is potential in Cameroon. So, we invited executives to discuss with Cameroonian authorities the possibilities of transposing the same concept realized in Dubai to Cameroon. The feedback is positive and the reflec-

tion has begun," says Mohamadou Dabo.

"We were among the first promoters to understand the tremendous potential of offering private investors the opportunity to buy hotel rooms and suites and furnished apartments in our high-end establishments, located in very popular districts of Dubai. This strategy is our plan to expand into promising new markets and supports our commitment to developing great properties, brands, and services that offer attractive returns to our investors," said The First Group.

Cameroon raised over XAF2,000 bln via issuance of government securities over the past decade

Within 10 years, we have built a rich, solid and fruitful partnership thanks to which we raised XAF2,000 billion to address the State's cash flow problems and finance some investment projects.» This was revealed by Louis Paul Motaze on 20 February 2020, in Douala, during the celebration of Cameroon's partnership with local banks it approved as primary dealers on the BEAC's government securities market.

Indeed, in 2010, in view of its ever-increasing need for financial resources to enable the accomplishment of its sovereign missions, Cameroon had decided to resort to the capital market to diversify its budget's financing sources. In that regard, the country issued its first bond in late 2010.

This issuance was aimed at raising XAF200 billion.

This successful operation was followed by its first fundraising operations on the BEAC's government securities market (created in 2011). Nine years later, Cameroon remains



the main driving force in the market with an average of XAF300 billion raised every year.

«For all those operations, the Treasury has not had any payment defaults or deferred repayment,» the Finance Minister said during the meeting. Louis Paul Motaze was thus praising the quality of Cameroon's public securities that have attracted both national and foreign investors over the past 10 years.

Let's note that some international

backers like the IMF and the World Bank are not pleased with the more than XAF2,000 billion the country raised via issuance of government's securities.

In various reports on the Cameroonian economy, these two financial partners consistently go against the government's propensity to incur debt at non-concessional interest rates instead of concessional loans, which weigh less on the public debt.

AGRIBUSINESS

Daniel Ona Ondo : “CEMAC countries have a yearly structural food deficit of about XAF2,000 billion”

CEMAC countries have a yearly structural food deficit of about XAF2,000 billion. This was revealed by Daniel Ona Ondo, President of the CEMAC Commission while launching the session of the regional committee that identifies products to be granted regional free circulation rights. This revelation seems like a formal

invitation for economic operators to massively invest in the retailing sector because of the existing opportunities. It also informs about the opportunities in intra-community trade within CEMAC (officially estimated at 3% opposed to 15% for the UEMOA). To reverse the trend and boost production as well as trade between the

six CEMAC countries, institutions like the above-mentioned committee was created. This committee identifies products within the CEMAC region to be exempted from taxes. To be exempted, such products should include a certain percentage of raw materials into the production process.

IDB and the Government fund livestock and fisheries development project in the North-West

Last February 20, the North-West region's development mission Mideno officially launched a project for the development of livestock and fisheries.

The project is financed to the tune of XAF750 million by Cameroon and

the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). It is aimed at funding projects in the livestock and fish farming sectors by granting microcredits to the population.

According to its officials, this new project is an important tool in the

fight against poverty in the North-West region. Since 2016, the region and the South-West have been victims of violence perpetrated by separatists fighting for the partitioning of Cameroon.

Beef price jumped by 3.5% in 2019, following resumption of exports to Nigeria

In 2019, food prices have been among the main driving forces behind the rise of the inflation in Cameroon. That year indeed, inflation surged to 2.5%, the highest since 2015. Among the food products that contributed to the rise was beef, the National Institute of Statistics (INS) reports.

According to the institute, after a drop of 2.1% in 2018, the price of beef in Cameroon increased by 3.5% in 2019. This sharp rise is mainly due to the resumption of beef trades with

neighboring countries (Nigeria in particular), the INS explains. Indeed, because of the exactions started by Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram in 2013, Cameroon closed its Northern borders with Nigeria in 2015. Let's note that the Northern region is the main beef production area in Cameroon. In 2019, following the relative peace that ensued after fights led by the Cameroonian army against Boko Haram, Cameroon decided to open some of its borders with Nigeria.

This is the case of the Amchidé border, officially reopened since May 15, 2019. This town is the hub of trade between Nigeria and Cameroon in the Far North region. At the same time, several livestock markets, closed for years due to the insecurity created by Boko Haram, were also relaunched. Consequently, exports of Cameroonian beef to Nigeria have been boosted, leading to higher prices on the local market.

PCP-Afop to train 3,500 people in agropastoral and fishing sectors in 2020-2021

The agropastoral and fishing training programme PCP-Afop, steered by the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, has just launched the recruitment of the 6th class of residents for its 88 training centres scattered around Cameroon. According to information revealed during the 17th meeting of the steering committee of this government

programme, 40 young people will be welcomed in each of the above-mentioned centres, for a 2-year training course.

This means that more than 3,500 young people will be trained in agropastoral and fishing trades between 2020 and 2021.

In addition to this training, PCP-Afop plans to dispatch trainees across

production sectors in the course of the year. *"The young people are currently being placed at large production basins. These basins are enrolling 1,500 young people in around 15 strategic sectors, including nine plant and six animal sectors,"* said Pierre Blaise Ango, the programme's national coordinator.

INS fears rise in fish prices amid ban of fish imports from China



In Cameroon, fish prices could soon go up, according to a note recently published by the National Institute of Statistics (INS).

The INS explains that this rise should be spurred by the government's decision, in early February 2020, to ban the importation of fresh or frozen fish products from China. This measure was issued as a prevention against the Coronavirus epidemic. As the institute reveals, China is

Cameroon's second-largest supplier of fish products. Operators involved in the importation of frozen fishes buy 50.6% of their supply from African countries (Mauritania, Senegal), 19.6% from Asia (China) and 12.9% from Europe (Ireland). The fish imports boost local production, which went from 252,214 tons in 2014 to 292,675 tons in 2018. Despite a 40,461 tons increase over a 4-year period, this is not enough to

meet the national demand estimated at about 400,000 tons yearly. According to figures from the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (Minépie), Cameroon imports 200,000 tons of fish every year to complement the low national production. Those imports cost the country about XAF170 billion yearly, the same source indicates.

INDUSTRY

Guinness Cameroon claims hourly whisky bottling capacity of 2,200

Guinness Cameroon reveals that the hourly whisky bottling capacity of its plant (officially launched in Douala on September 7, 2017) is 2,200 bottles.

The local subsidiary of British brewery group Diageo made the revelation in the presentation document elaborated for the celebration of the group's 50 years presence in Cameroon this year.

"Guinness Cameroon SA is the first brewery, in Cameroon and the Central African sub-region to bottle scotch outside Scotland," the brewery group indicates.

Initially a brewery group, Guinness Cameroon SA also went into the importation and marketing of wines to diversify its offers in a market dominated by SABC (subsidiary of Castel that controls 74% of the

Cameroonian brewery market).

Guinness Cameroon SA is also Diageo group's second subsidiary in Africa (Nigeria being the first). Let's note that Cameroon is Diageo's fourth-largest market in the whole world, according to Andy Fennel, then Diageo's chairman for the African region, during his visit to Cameroon in 2014.

Counterfeit paints - producing network dismantled in Yaoundé

In Cameroon, the fraud and counterfeit repression unit of the Ministry of Commerce recently dismantled a network of counterfeit paints producers in Yaoundé.

Those fraudsters, discovered in Elig-

Edzoa, used to mix expired paints with good ones. With the complicity of some hardware stores' managers, the fraudsters introduce the mixed products into the commercial circuit of Yaoundé and environs.

Not only did the accomplices buy the counterfeited products but, they also supply the fraudsters with expired paints to be used, official sources indicate.

Cameroon launches Profeaac to boost domestic timber trade

On Feb 25, Cameroon officially launched Profeaac, a project for the Promotion and Formalization of Artisanal Timber Exploitation in Central Africa. Endowed with a budget of XAF3 billion, this project will be implemented over a period of 4 years, in the Central and Eastern regions of the country.

Funded by partners such as the French Development Agency (AFD), the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and German cooperation agency, Profeaac is aimed at boosting the domestic timber trade. According to project coordinator Guillaume Lescuyer, «Profeaac will strive to supply the domestic market

with locally produced and processed wood."

"We will not only raise awareness about the sources of supply in the communes of Mindourou in the East and Dzeng in the Centre. We will also educate on the consumer markets in big cities," he adds.



INFRASTRUCTURE

CHEC appointed for the exploitation and maintenance of Kribi-Lolable expressway

Chinese construction company CHEC, that built the 38.5-km Kribi-Lolable expressway connecting to Kribi deep seaport, will exploit and maintain the said expressway. This is revealed in a release signed, on February 20, 2020, by Cameroon's Minister of Public Works Emmanuel Nganou Djoumessi. In the release, the official indicates that in the framework of a public-private partnership, Cameroon attributed the designing, construction equipment, exploitation and maintenance of the Kribi-Lolable expressway to CHEC.

This appointment should be much to CHEC's delight. Indeed, the company that pre-funded Cameroon's share in the construction to the tune of XAF38.6 billion has since been asking to participate in the management of the expressway. The designation of the operator/concessionaire in charge of the exploitation and management of the expressway was one of the conditions required to lift the suspension imposed, in June 2018, by Eximbank on the disbursements of funds in favor of the project.

The construction of the infrastructures has, by the way, been relaunched, according to internal sources at the Autonomous Port of Kribi (PAK). Started on January 1, 2015, Kribi-Lolable expressway is expected to be delivered on October 31, 2020, after a 28-month extension. According to the Ministry of Public Works, currently, the completion rate of the works is about 90%.

Mbanga-Bakoko social housing : Construction companies ordered to deliver works by end 2020



In Cameroon, companies working on the construction of the social housing at Mbanga-Bakoko are ordered to deliver the houses before end 2020. This order was instructed by Ahmadou Sardaoua (photo), Director-General of Société immobilière du Cameroun (SIC) during his

visit in Douala last February 20. During the visit, the officer noticed that the execution rate of the construction contracts launched 10 years ago is no more than 50%. This glaring lateness in the project aimed at providing additional 10,000 social houses to the government is

the fault of companies in charge. Many missions conducted on the field over the 10 years revealed that many of those companies do not have good financial standing. The contracts with many of them have been canceled but never reattributed.

Construction of XAF74 bln Bongor-Yagoua road launched

On Feb 28, 2020, Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno and Cameroon's Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute officially launched the construction of the Bongor (Chad)-Yagoua (Cameroon) bridge.

The 620-meter long infrastructure should boost trade between Cameroon and Chad. It will be built over the Logone river and should be the second bridge connecting Chad and Cameroon. The first one being the Nguéli bridge connecting Kousseri, in Cameroon, to Ndjamena, Chad.

The Bongor-Yagoua bridge (XAF74 billion) will be funded by a loan and the European Union. The financial costs will be borne by both countries at the rate of 58% for Cameroon and 42% for Chad. As for the construction work, it is planned to last 36 weeks and entrusted to the Razel Cameroun-Razel Fayat-Sotcog consortium.

According to the AfDB, apart from the said bridge, the construction project includes 14.2 km of driveways divided as follows: 7.4 km at the Chadian side and 6.8 km at the

Cameroonian side. It also includes related works mainly constituted of socioeconomic infrastructures (border crossings and warning devices) bringing the total cost of this construction project to about XAF92 billion.

The project is one of the major integration projects currently being implemented in the CEMAC region. Indeed, there is also the project for the extension of Cameroon's railway towards Chad and the construction of the Sangmélina (Cameroon) - Ouessou (Congo) road.

45-km Yoko-Lena road section open to the public

On February 19, 2020, the Ministry of Public Works conducted the technical acceptance of Yoko-Léna section (45.241 km) of the Batchenga-Ntui-Yoko-Lena-Tibati road.

According to the ministry, this stage consists of assessing the technical quality of the infrastructure and its compliance with the specifications. It emerged that, despite some minor flaws, the work is as requested. The minor flaws concern the horizontal marking and painting on the mileage markers from kilometre point 200 +100 to kilometre point 201 +100. Chinese company Sinohydro, in charge of the work, promised to correct them.

The infrastructure is therefore now open to traffic with a one-year guarantee. During that guarantee period, Sinohydro will have to correct any construction defects that may occur.

Final acceptance will take place at the end of the guarantee period.

The work carried out since February 2017 was completed in August 2019. It consisted of the construction of a



road infrastructure with the following characteristics: a 2 x 3.5 m pavement in asphalt concrete and a 2 x 1.50 m dual-layer pavement, with a reference speed of 80 km/h. The total

cost of the works is XAF23.39 billion, which corresponds to the initial amount allocated to the project.



TRANSPORTATION

ADC purchases XAF760 mln worth of airport support equipment



Aéroports du Cameroun (ADC), in charge of airport platforms in Cameroon, informs it recently acquired new manufactured support equipment by French Miloco Production.

The French company delivered 40 container handling trucks, twenty-six 20-foot pallet trucks, 15 luggage carrying trolleys, 2 covered luggage trolleys and 30 container storage benches. "These acquisitions, valued at nearly XAF760 million, will surely

boost the operation of airports and thus boost quality of services," ADC says delighted.

The company adds that the acquisition of all these equipment is part of the high management's airport infrastructure and equipment modernizing policy in the framework of the company's 2017-2022 strategic plan.

In the framework of that plan, ADC has already purchased 1,396 seats for boarding lounges at Douala,

Yaounde-Nsimalen, Garoua and Bamenda airports.

In addition, elevators and escalators have been renovated at the Yaoundé-Nsimalen airport. The apron area was also renovated and a power station built for the production and distribution of emergency energy. Four auto-buses were also purchased for the transshipment of passengers at the international airports of Yaoundé-Nsimalen, Douala, and Garoua.

Denmark discusses cooperation areas in the maritime sector with Cameroon

On February 19, 2020, in Yaoundé, the Minister of Transport, Ernest Massena Ngalle Bibehé, received in audience Danish ambassador to Cameroon Jesper Kamp.

According to sources that attended the meeting, the discussions revolved around the areas in which the two countries can cooperate in the maritime sector.

To this end, the Director of Maritime Affairs and Inland Waterways of the Ministry of Transport referred, among others, to the strengthening of Cameroon's capacity in coastal security, the development of inland waterways navigation and the training of navigators. However, there is currently no indication of the terms that will govern the cooperation.

Denmark already operates in Cameroon through Maersk, the world's leading container carrier. The Danish group alone controls



40% of the maritime freight to and from Cameroon.

Recently, the Danish shipowner seems to have developed a liking for the port of Kribi, a seaside town in the south of Cameroon. Since 10 February, for instance, Maersk's container ship Safmarine Chachai

has been anchored on the quays of the deep seaport of Mboro in Kribi. The 250-metre long vessel currently carries more than 4,000 containers, of which slightly more than a quarter are destined for the port of Kribi.

French start-up Heetch effectively launches VIP motorcycle taxi service with a network of 250 drivers

Equipped with pink vests and helmets, 250 motorcycle taxis now roam the streets of Douala, on behalf of French start-up Heetch, the government daily Cameroon Tribune reveals.

Indeed, on May 8, 2019, Heetch announced the success of a fund-raising operation of €34 million euros (about XAF23 billion), to establish itself in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Algeria, and Senegal, and develop its activities in Belgium.

In addition to the VIP motorcycle taxi business, Heetch also offers Cameroon its Car-with-driver service. This start-up is, therefore, competing with local companies such as Easyride, which provides taxi services for VIPs, or Bee Sarl, which is also helping modernize the motorcycle taxi business in Cameroon.





ITC & TELECOM

Digital economy : Cameroon plans creation of development center, this year, to support ICT startups

This year, Cameroon will create a center for the development of the digital economy. This was revealed, on February 18, by Minette Libom Li Likeng (photo), the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. This was during an audience she granted to the three winners of the 2019 Ericsson Innovation Awards on their return from an immersion trip to the incubation centre of equipment manufacturer Ericsson in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The three winners are the promoters of the start-ups Agrix Tech (an application for detecting and offering treatment for plant diseases), Smartscope (a digital solution adapted to the fight against malaria), and Intelligent Transport. During the audience, Minister Libom Li Likeng reaffirmed the government's determination to spare no effort in developing the digital economy. Thus the creation of the center. According to official sources, the

center will offer young people comprehensive support in the process of maturation of ICT projects, until the creation of viable businesses. It will also detect, incubate and develop projects in the field of digital technology, in order to develop a local industry for the development of "made in Cameroon" applications.

Internet penetration rate up 30% YoY in Jan 2020, with the addition of 570,000 new users

In January 2020, 7.8 million people were connected to the internet in Cameroon according to a report published by Hootsuite and We Are Social, two organizations that monitor internet and social media feed. With that number of users, the internet penetration rate reached 30% in the country in January 2020. According to the same source, year over year, there is a 7.8% (570,000 new users) increase in the use of internet in Cameroon.

That increase was driven by high mobile penetration rate since users mostly use smartphones, which are now affordable.

Indeed, according to the report, over 59% of Cameroonian internet users browse using smartphones while 39.4% access internet using compu-



ters and 1.3% via tablets. In 2016, Internet Live Stats reported that Cameroon (+16.5), Mali (+18.6%) and Lesotho (+18.1%) were the 3

African countries with the highest year-over-year growth in internet penetration rate.

SERVICES

Moroccan business school ESCA advertises its trainings to Cameroonian students



For some days now, a delegation of officials and Cameroonian students of Moroccan business school ESCA have been in Cameroon. During the tour, started in Douala, the delegation described the various vocational trainings offered in Morocco to students from some schools located

in the town of Douala. During this charm offensive, ESCA's officials and students highlighted the quality of the business school's training and infrastructures. According to them, ESCA has the same standard as school institutions in developed countries.

This information and admission tests sessions, during which Cameroonian students were invited to choose Esca and Morocco for their future vocational training, will continue in Yaoundé this week.

Higher education : 10,000 Cameroonians are pursuing graduate studies in France

Currently, 10,000 Cameroonians are pursuing graduate studies in France. This was revealed by French officials during the signature cooperation agreement between French and Cameroonian universities for the mobility of students and teachers' capacity-building. The fields of study include political science, law, medicine, human and

social sciences, information and communications technology. In the area of teachers' capacity-building, 120 Cameroonian magistrates, lawyers, and civil servants were trained in 2019 by the International Institute for Human Rights in Strasbourg and 12 training scholarships were offered to Cameroon by France.

Over 2018-2019, France hosted 7,445 Cameroonian students, 47% of whom were women. During this period, there were 4,435 students in universities, 1,123 in business schools, 925 in engineering schools, 44 in schools of arts and architecture, 442 in vocational courses and 476 Cameroonians in other institutions.



WILLIAM FOTCHINE LAUNCHES CAMEROON'S FIRST MATERIALS LIBRARY TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE LOCAL INTERIOR DESIGN MARKET



Cameroon's first materials library was inaugurated on December 12, 2019, in Yaoundé. It was launched by William Fotchine (photo) who claims to be conscious of the positive impact an efficient working environment can have on the worker's state of mind, their output and thus the performances of the firms they are working for.

The 53-year-old Cameroonian interior designer who founded Coplacam Design and Build has worked for companies headquartered in France for 25 years. Through this space, he is providing the local professional

world a range of new materials and technical skills essential to reinvent the working environment. Having experienced it for many years in Europe, he sees the materials library as an opportunity to give back to Cameroonian civil servants and other workers the desire to go to their working place and even the pleasure of staying there longer. William Fotchine engaged in this adventure in Cameroon because he believes "interior finishing is still neglected during constructions" in the country. For him, "if the building is important, its interior finishing is

all the more important, because the workers will spend a large part of their lives there."

The local materials library is supported by Gypse Africa, a subsidiary of Coplacam Design and Build, specially created in 2014 for the African market. The entrepreneur claims he has already invested nearly XAF1 billion in the subsidiary adding that he intends to create an interior design school.

"It will be the first interior finishing school in the sub-region. This is the final phase of the project. Our project is continental. This means that every time we set up a materials library in an African country, we will build a training school as well because when you bring a new way of doing things you must teach how to do it. Given the unemployment we have in Africa, I think we're going to stop giving interior design contracts to Italians or Turks. We need to train our children in that area so that in the future, they can also be sought after on the international market for their expertise," the promoter says.

The designers and technicians who graduate from this school will then be able to respond to the needs expressed by individuals. After Cameroon, Gypse Africa sees Côte d'Ivoire as a mature market with many possibilities.

Muriel Edjo et BRM

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