



Doing Business In Cameroon: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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Chapter 1: Doing Business In Cameroon

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Market Overview

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- Cameroon is the largest economy in the six-nation Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), with a GDP of \$17.25 billion (2007) and annual growth of around 3 % between 2005 and 2007. Cameroon boasts one of the highest per capita incomes (by purchasing power parity) in sub-Saharan Africa, at \$2,300 (2007).
- Cameroon has a wealth of natural resources, including rich potential in the agricultural, forestry, and mining sectors, an ample labor force, and an enviable location between large markets in Nigeria to the west and Central Africa to the south and east. Cameroon is often described as “Africa in Miniature” because of its unparalleled ethnic, linguistic, and geographic diversity.
- The Bank of Central African States (BEAC) sets monetary policy for Cameroon and other CEMAC members. BEAC estimates that inflation in Cameroon in 2007 was 4.4%, an increase of 1.4% over 2006. CEMAC’s currency, the Central African Franc (CFA), is managed by BEAC and guaranteed at a rate of 665.957 CFA to the Euro by the Treasury of the Government of France.
- Cameroon’s major exports are oil and cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, timber, rubber, cotton, and bananas. Cameroon imports mainly semi-processed products, industrial inputs, machinery, and food products. The European Union is Cameroon’s main trading partner with about 60 percent of the total share of trade. France is by far Cameroon's major supplier of imported goods and services. United States trade with Cameroon has increased with the advent of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), but many of the potential benefits of AGOA remain under-realized. The Government of Cameroon signed a decree on October 29,

2007 creating and organizing a National Technical Committee to follow up on AGOA implementation and abrogating the 2001 decree.

- A committee commissioned by the Government of Cameroon in May 2007 ranked the United States as the largest single foreign investor in Cameroon, in large part due to the substantial American equity in the Chad-Cameroon pipeline and the power sector. There are several large American investments pending in the mining, power, and hotel sectors. U.S. imports from Cameroon have substantially increased from \$157 million in 2005 to \$274 million in 2006, with new sales of crude oil and fuel oil accounting for much of the increase (\$208 million in 2006).
- Cameroon reached the “completion point” of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt forgiveness process in April 2006, triggering debt relief that will create about \$5 billion in savings over the next few decades. The windfall for the Cameroonian Treasury is intended to help finance infrastructure, health, and education projects.
- Yaounde is the nation’s political capital, but Douala, the largest city, serves as the economic capital of Cameroon and the Central African region. Almost all transport in and out of Cameroon, Chad, and the Central African Republic transits through Douala’s port, located slightly inland from the Gulf of Guinea, on the banks of the Wouri River. Cameroon is well-served by mobile service providers and access to the Internet, including broadband, is available in the major cities, although problems with capacity often hamper services.
- Cameroon is a republic, with a strong central government headed by President Paul Biya, who has been in office since 1982. The ten provinces are governed by Presidentially-appointed Governors, and larger cities are managed by Presidentially-appointed Government Delegates. Although the Constitution provides for a National Assembly (Parliament), a Senate, and an independent judiciary, in practice the constitutional provisions relating to the Senate have not yet been implemented and the judiciary remains under the control of the Presidency.

Market Challenges

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- Cameroon continues to be one of the most challenging business environments in the world, ranking among the lower quarter (154 out of

178) of the countries surveyed in the World Bank's ["Doing Business"](#) evaluation. Difficulty in resolving commercial disputes, particularly the enforcement of contractual rights, remains one of the serious obstacles in promoting investment in Cameroon. American claimants are often frustrated with the slow pace of the Cameroon legal system. However, the Cameroon Council of Business Managers and Professional Associations (GICAM, French acronym) has created an arbitration center that helps expedite the process, provided both parties clearly agreed in their investment convention that in the case of litigation GICAM's arbitration center is competent.

- Economic policy mismanagement and a poor business climate have restrained investment and hindered economic diversification. The private sector continues to identify a predatory tax environment, insufficient and unreliable power provision, and inadequate infrastructure as impediments to greater economic growth.
- Although Cameroon is officially a bilingual (French and English) country, most Cameroonians are not bilingual; French is the common language of business, political and social interaction.

Market Opportunities

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- Cameroon's agricultural sector: Cameroon's agriculture sector is already the mainstay of the national economy and the country's main employer, but many believe there is room for further growth and, especially, modernization of the sector.
- Cameroon's oil and gas sector: Although Cameroon's oil reserves are largely perceived to have passed their zenith, there remain a number of promising prospects for appropriately sized investors. Cameroon's investor-friendly oil and gas code of 1999 aims to encourage new exploration and further exploitation of maturing fields, especially for onshore blocks, which have not received the attention of Cameroon's offshore assets.
- Cameroon's mining sector: Cameroon is richly endowed with mining assets including bauxite, cobalt, uranium, iron ore, rutile, and gold. In 2001, the Government passed a new law to promote terrestrial mining and President Biya has made the mining sector a priority for national development.

- Cameroon's industrial sector: Opportunities exist in the light-manufacturing sector where Cameroon assembles and exports imported components for local and regional consumption. Planned investment in transportation, communications, and power infrastructure should encourage this sector in the medium-term by facilitating trade links with neighboring countries.

Market Entry Strategy

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- Companies wishing to enter Cameroon's market will want to consider seeking local partners to help navigate the unusually challenging and complex business environment. A properly vetted local agent can sell directly to wholesalers and can help new firms obtain market knowledge at low cost. For products requiring after-sales service and spare parts, appointing a distributor is recommended. Agents and distributors must register with the government and their contracts must be notarized and published in the local press.

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Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link below to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26431.htm>

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Using an Agent or Distributor

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Several dozen American companies are represented in Cameroon (usually in Douala), either directly or through agents or distributors. The U.S. Embassy Commercial Section offers a wide range of services to assist American businesses planning to enter the Cameroonian market. American companies opening or expanding their operations in Cameroon are recommended to contact the [Commercial Section at the Embassy in Yaounde](#) for free consultations or fee-based services. Fee-based Gold Key Services, for example, are tailored to the needs of the American company and can include introductions to business and political leaders, vetting of local agents or partners, and market research.

Establishing an Office

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Although in theory the process to establish a business in Cameroon is relatively straightforward, the reality is that Cameroon ranks 160 (out of 178 countries surveyed) in the category “Starting A Business” by the World Bank’s 2008 “Doing Business” Survey.

An investor who wishes to establish operations in Cameroon will need to:

--Submit an application (with fee) for registration with the Trade Register through the Registry of the Court of First Instance in the area where the company will be established.

--Obtain a Tax Payer's Card (nominal fee) and Business License from the Tax Department in the Ministry of Finance. There are different categories of business licenses (with corresponding differences in fees), based on expected turnover of the company.

--Declare the employed staff with the competent services of the National Social Insurance Fund (NSIF) for pension payments.

--Obtain valid entry and residential documents (for all foreign nationals). Visas for visiting Cameroon can be obtained from Embassies abroad. Residential documents must be obtained once present in Cameroon through the General Delegate for National Security (the National Police, or DGSN).

Franchising

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Although there are some successful franchises of American companies in Cameroon, the potential for franchising remains largely unexplored and untapped. The strength and popularity of the "Made in the USA" brand in Cameroon suggests that American-origin franchises could be successful. Franchising statutes are determined by the [African Intellectual Property Organization](#) (OAPI) which was based on the Bagui Convention.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

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Seeking professional assistance in negotiating agreements, selecting partners, and carefully controlling resources are vital when establishing a presence in the Cameroonian market. Joint ventures and licensing arrangements require caution, as widespread corruption and business scams present risks for investors. Also, U.S. investors often complain of undue influence exercised by entrenched French interests on their Cameroonian public and private partners.

Selling to the Government

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Government procurement follows a public tender and competitive selection process. Government project "owners" (such as ministers,

general managers of public and parastatal enterprises, governors, senior divisional officers, or mayors) are effectively in charge of the tender process, from the publication of tender notice to the award of the contract. All procurement contracts over and above \$10,000 must pass through a tender process supervised by a special committee put in place by the Public Procurement Regulatory Agency. These committees organize the tender and selection process, examine and appraise the tender and contract documents, analyze bids, and suggest the winning contractor to the project owner. Additionally, contracts in certain sectors (roads, buildings, general supplies over a certain amount, and services) are subject to the control and monitoring of special committees at the Prime Minister's office.

The American Embassy in Yaounde receives copies of invitations to tender for Government Procurements from the Regulation Board, especially when international financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, African Development Bank or the European Development Bank provide the financing. The Embassy then transmits them to the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Trade Data Bank (NTDB) for dissemination to the American business community. If calls for tender are restricted, the Embassy will inform American bidders directly.

Distribution and Sales Channels

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Distribution: Almost all goods entering Cameroon (and land-locked neighbors Chad and the Central African Republic) transit through the Port of Douala and are distributed by trucks on the road network. There is a functioning but limited rail infrastructure from Douala to Yaounde and Ngaoundere and from Douala to Buea. The Government has announced plans for deep water ports in the coastal cities of Kribi and Limbe, but there has not yet been any substantial progress made towards completion.

Sales: There are few large shops or supermarkets outside of Douala and Yaounde. Small shops carrying a variety of merchandise dominate retail sales in all parts of the country. Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, Indians, Chinese, and Bamileke indigenes from the West Province operate large trading firms in Cameroon, and most have developed efficient distribution systems. Other Cameroonians, Nigerians, and Senegalese traders operate small retailing businesses. Small scale vendors operating small shops control 35% of the retail market. Cameroonian buyers are usually very

price-sensitive and street hawkers hold a substantial share of the retail segment. The continuing growth of small-scale Chinese entrepreneurs in Cameroon has substantially increased the quantity of Chinese products and competition in the retail sector.

Selling Factors/Techniques

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Although French is the predominant language of Cameroon's economy, many Cameroonians (especially higher-end consumers) have a grasp of English and English-language products would not be unduly disadvantaged. Cameroon's personal credit markets are not developed, but a Cameroonian bank has recently introduced a consumer debit card system.

Electronic Commerce

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Although Cameroon's IT sector is growing, electronic commerce is unlikely to feature in Cameroon's economy for the foreseeable future.

Trade Promotion and Advertising

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Advertising is available in Cameroon through a wide variety of media, including mobile telephony, newspapers, magazines, billboards, radio, and television.

Newspaper and magazine advertising may be placed at reasonable rates with the Government-owned daily Cameroon Tribune or with more than 20 private print media. Major newspapers include:

- Cameroon Tribune (government-owned, bilingual daily): B.P. 1218, Yaounde, Cameroon; Tel.: (237) 22-30-41-47 or 22-30-36-89; Fax: (237) 22-30-43-62. <http://www.cameroon-tribune.net>
- Mutations (privately-owned, French-language daily): B.P. 12348, Yaounde, Cameroon; Tel.: (237) 22-22-51-04; Fax (237) 22-22-96-35. <http://www.quotidienmutations.net>
- The Herald (privately-owned, English-language tri-weekly): B.P. 3659, Yaounde, Cameroon; Tel./Fax: (237) 22-31-84-97. Douala: Tel/Fax: (237) 33-42-08-74
- Le Messenger (privately owned, French-language daily): B.P. 5925, Douala, Cameroon; Tel.: (237) 342-04-39; Fax: (237) 342-53-74. <http://www.lemessenger.net>

- La Nouvelle Expression (privately-owned, French-language daily): B.P. 15333, Douala, Cameroon; Tel.: (237) 33-42-22-27; Fax: (237) 33-43-26-69. <http://www.lanouvelleexpression.net>

Cameroon Public-Expansion (CPE), a government-owned publicity agency, no longer has a monopoly over billboards and sign advertising. Private advertising firms may be contacted for publicity assistance. A monthly information guide for Douala (*Night & Day*), published by Synergie, is distributed free. Advertising via slides and short films in theaters can be effective, especially in Yaounde, Douala, Bafoussam, and Bamenda, which have large film audiences. Advertising can also be carried out on CRTV, the Government radio/TV network, and other private radio and TV stations at reasonable rates in English and/or French.

[Promote](#), Cameroon's most prestigious international trade show, will open for the third time at the Yaounde Conference Center in December 2008. Companies from the Central Africa sub-region, agents and representatives of companies from the Middle East, Europe, and Asia heavily attended Promote 2005. Other regularly scheduled trade fairs in Cameroon include the Bafoussam fair in February and PROMO, a general trade fair organized at the end of each year in Yaounde by the Cameroon Chamber of Commerce. Individual companies sometimes organize exhibitions in Douala and Yaounde.

Pricing

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Cameroonian businesses and consumers are extremely price-sensitive and suffer from lack of readily-available local credit. American-made goods are perceived to be of superior quality and thus may fetch a premium over lesser-quality goods.

Since 1994, the government lifted all price controls on commodities with the exception of "strategic" goods and services such as electricity, water, public transportation/roads, telecommunications, cooking gas, pharmaceuticals, and portside activities (such as stevedoring). The Government nevertheless is known to impose spontaneous price controls on some basic commodities (e.g., poultry products, sugar, maize, vegetable oils), but these controls are only marginally effective. Businesses generally use the price of imported goods as the reference price for future production. Profit margins are not fixed for imported goods.

U.S. exporters can price their product in Euros, especially for deliveries over a 6-12 month period, as the currency (CFA) is pegged at a fixed exchange rate with the Euro (1 Euro = 656.957 CFA). Costs should be computed on a cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) basis.

Sales Service/Customer Support

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Potential customers of American-made products may be deterred by the difficulty of finding qualified after-sales service or reasonably-priced spare parts in Cameroon. It is highly recommended to use a local distributor for products requiring after-sales services or customer support. French language user's manuals, frequent personnel training, and a large inventory of spare parts are crucial components for successful after-sales services in Cameroon.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property

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American companies may encounter difficulties in protecting their intellectual property rights in Cameroon. Although Cameroon technically adheres to the relevant conventions (see [the portion on IPR in the Investment Climate Statement](#)), in practice enforcement remains problematic.

Due Diligence

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Investors wishing to do business in Cameroon should seek professional assistance in negotiating agreements, selecting partners, and controlling resources. Before selecting Cameroonian partners, businesses should consult with the [U.S. Embassy's Commercial Section](#) or use the professional assistance of one of the Country Market Research Firms.

Local Professional Services

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American investors should use a local attorney to deal with Cameroon's slow moving, complex, and sometimes-corrupt legal system. A list of local attorneys can be obtained from the U.S. Embassy in Yaounde through the [Consular Section](#) or the [Commercial Section](#).

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(Drilling and Oilfield Equipment / 84 (HS-8431))

Overview

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	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports	226,000,000	167,792,000	170,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	70,171,000	73,215,000	70,000,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

Cameroon continues to have a robust oil and gas sector, and Cameroon's mining sector is expected to expand rapidly in coming years. The exploitation and processing of liquefied natural gas seems to be highly promising since Cameroon possesses substantial gas resources and domestic supply regularly fails to meet demand. Cameroon's annual production of natural gas is 30,000 tons while the national demand exceeds 70,000. Despite Government efforts to subsidize the sector, domestic prices rose by more than 33 percent during the last half of 2007 and the market has suffered from frequent shortages in supply. Cameroon has abundant gas reserves in the Douala and Kribi basins and the Government is seeking foreign investors that would be interested in developing the two fields.

Best Products/Services

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- Casing, tubing, and drilling pipes of a kind used in drilling for oil or gas.
- Parts for boring or sinking machinery of onshore oil and natural gas drilling and production platforms

Opportunities

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- Douala and Kribi gas development projects.
- Bakassi oilfield development project.

TELECOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT / 85(HS 8517)

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	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports	150,634,000	45,148,000	180,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	3,607,000	3,197,000	3,500,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

Although Cameroon's National Institute of Statistics indicates only \$45 million of telecommunication equipment imports in 2006, contacts within the sector suggest that actual imports were likely two or three times higher. All three players in the sector—South African-owned MTN, French-owned Orange, and Government-owned CAMTEL—have undertaken significant new investments in 2007.

Best Prospects/Services

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Telecommunication equipment for the transmission of voice, data, text, and full motion picture video between network termination points and telecommunication reselling are potential good prospects. Switching equipment and transmission antenna that would provide direct communication via airwaves are likely to be of interest.

Opportunities

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State-owned telcom CAMTEL is slated to be privatized, but progress has been sluggish. Both private operators (Orange and MTN) are expected to increase their investments in the sector.

INPUTS FOR THE ALUMINUM SMELTING / 28 (NAICS-325)

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	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports	21,190,000	14,210,000	20,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	2,542,800	1,700,000	1,900,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto owns the ALUCAM aluminum operations in Edea, Cameroon. Rio Tinto has announced plans to significantly increase smelting capacity at the current Edea facility and through the construction of a new facility. Integral to the expansion will be the construction of two new hydroelectric dams.

Best Prospects/Services

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Exportation of coke and other direct inputs to the aluminum smelting process.

Opportunities

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Petroleum coke and pitch additives for aluminum smelting.

Resources

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The extension of Alucam's smelting capacity.

(PASSENGER CARS (NAICS – 3363))

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	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports	81,346,000	74,260,000	75,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	2,039,000	1,990,000	2,000,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

American businesses are making increasing in-roads into Cameroon's market for vehicles. The above figures represent direct imports from the U.S. and exclude substantial re-exports from European dealers. The luxury vehicle market in Cameroon is traditionally dominated by European lines, but American brands like Hummer are increasingly in vogue.

Best Prospects/Services

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Four wheel drive vehicles are in strong demand because of the poor state of Cameroonian roads.

Specialized vehicles (security vehicles, utility vehicles) are under-supplied.

Opportunities

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The Military

Oil exploration companies

Forestry companies

Mining companies

(FISHING BOATS (NAICS-3366))

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	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports (USD)	32,846,000	3,191,000	30,000,000
Imports from the U.S. (USD)	2,889,000	844,000	2,500,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

There has been a growing interest in second-hand U.S. fishing boats since a Cameroonian fishing company imported four fishing vessels from a Florida-based manufacturer in 2004. There is also an increasing demand for the nautical engines and parts that represent more than 50% of the market share in this category. Freight carriers and oil transportation companies, including Cameroon Shipping Lines, have expressed interest in acquiring used vessels from the U.S. through Export Import Bank financing. Unfortunately, the Embassy has been experiencing difficulties in locating a supplier in the United States in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Best Prospects/Services

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Fishing boats
Tankers
Container vessels
Engines and parts

Opportunities

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Cameroon Shipping Company (CAMSHIP)
Other Fishing companies
Oil transportation companies

NEWSPRINT (NAICS - 3222)

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	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports	70,826,000	86,875,555	100,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	1,659,000	846,000	2,500,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

Cameroon has no pulpwood manufacturing industry and its market for paper products increased 22 percent during fiscal year 2006. Newly created magazines and newsprints accounted for the increase. The Commercial Manager of the National Printing Press Company, SOPECAM, attended the third edition of the U.S. Embassy-affiliated Business and Technology Forum in Chicago in October 2007 to meet with U.S. suppliers of printing equipment and newsprint. There is hope that despite decreasing in 2006, U.S. exports in this category will increase in the years to come. Recent small-scale investments in factories to produce bathroom tissue from recycled materials should increase the demand for the necessary paper product inputs.

Best Products/Services

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Newsprint
Raw materials for recycle paper products

Opportunities

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Private newspaper companies
Newly created hygienic paper manufacturing facilities

AIRCRAFT PARTS (NAICS – 4811)

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	2004	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports	3,556,000	1,756,000	3,260,000	6,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	802,000	791,000	552,000	500,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

As of February 2008, the Government of Cameroon had not yet declared its intentions with regards to the national airline, CAMAIR, which has been slated for privatization. Whatever the eventual disposition of the company, it is expected that a renewal of the fleet will be necessary in the near term. The minimum fleet of the new company would likely be four Boeing aircrafts, as all CAMAIR pilots are trained on Boeing equipment.

A number of small-sized airline companies operating domestic routes started operations in 2004 (Air Leasing Cameroon, Air Service Cameroon, COTAIR Cameroon, Elysian). A British subsidiary air cargo company, AVIENT, started operations in November 2007 with a declared weekly capacity of 130 tons of freight.

Best Products/Services

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The new acquirer of CAMAIR would need a minimum of three new Boeing 737-300 for internal and sub-regional lines, one 767 for European destinations, and spare parts for scheduled maintenance.

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The up-tick in aviation activity in Cameroon provides an opportunity for American firms to provide aircraft, parts, maintenance, and other services.

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Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority:

<http://www.ccaa.aero>

NACAM:

<http://www.flynacam.com>

Agricultural Sectors

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1. CEREALS

	2005	2006	2007 (estimated)
Total Market Size	n/a	n/a	
Total Local Production	n/a	n/a	
Total Exports	n/a	n/a	
Total Imports	113,117,000	268,617,777	300,000,000
Imports from the U.S.	5,054,000	3,345,000	5,000,000

Data source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census & Cameroon National Institute of Statistics.

Cameroon has six flourmills. All but one use a mixture of American and European wheat in different proportions. The largest one has built six silos in the vicinity of the Douala port and uses exclusively American wheat. American cereals are currently imported through European dealers that agree to arrange smaller, mixed shipments because larger American ships are unable to dock at the Douala port. (The Douala port, due to silting problems, can only accommodate ships of 15,000 tons or less). Arranging smaller shipments of American cereals would help increase the competitiveness of U.S. cereal exports, as would the availability of U.S. government export financing from either Ex-Im or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The rice market provides an additional opportunity for U.S. exports. The USDA has recently provided grants of rice (for monetization) to the Government of Cameroon under the Food for Progress Program. An unintended benefit of these programs has been the cultivation of local appreciation—and now growing demand for—U.S. rice.

Best Products/Services

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Wheat in small shipments

Rice

Opportunities

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Contact the [Commercial Section](#) for further information.

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Import Tariffs

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The 1994 Regional Fiscal Reform Program outlines six different tariffs and taxes associated with the importation of goods: the Common External Tariff, the Generalized Preferential Tariff, the Temporary Surcharge, the Excise Tax, the Value Added Tax, and other Service Taxes.

The Common External Tariff (TEC in French) groups merchandise into four categories, with rates ranging from 5 to 20 percent:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	TEC Rate
I	First necessity goods (defined by ministerial decree, these are goods such as essential foodstuffs and medicines)	5
II	Raw materials and equipment	10
III	Intermediary (semi-processed) goods	20
IV	Final products (consumption goods)	30

The Value Added Tax (VAT, or TVA in French) is a consumer tax. VAT is assessed on merchandise entering the country on the CIF value plus duties basis and levied on most products at a rate of 19.25 percent (Category I goods are VAT free). Additionally, the Excise Tax, an indirect 25% tax,

covers specific categories of some luxury goods listed on a ministerial decree. Finally, there is a 1.0 % Regional Integration Tax (TCI in French). These last two tax items are assessed on the CIF value of imports.

The administration of these tariffs is very complex. Potential exporters to Cameroon may wish to contact the Customs Administration or [Société Générale de Surveillance \(SGS\)](#), which handles pre-loading cargo inspections for the Cameroonian Government and issues an importation declaration upon receipt of the pro forma invoice.

Trade Barriers

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In January 1994, Cameroon became the first state in the Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC) to implement new customs and investment codes. The new codes eliminated quantitative restrictions on imports, lifted non-tariff protections, eliminated many import licensing requirements, and simplified customs assessments. Since January 1998, in theory, tariffs have been eliminated within CEMAC, and only a value-added tax should be applied to goods traded among CEMAC member countries. However, there has been some delay in achieving this goal and currently both customs duties and the value-added tax are being assessed on trade within CEMAC.

In the third quarter of 2004 the GRC, in an effort to protect its nascent poultry sector, limited the importation of frozen chicken to Cameroon. Frozen chicken imports were limited to 2,500 tons in 2006. The quota could be drawn down to zero if the local poultry industry can meet domestic demand.

Import Requirements and Documentation

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Since 1994, Cameroon has simplified its import licensing procedures. A prospective importer is now only required to register with the local Ministry of Commerce and notify [SGS](#) of all imports above CFA 2,000,000 (about \$4,400). Special import permits are granted to individuals who import items for personal use. However, importers must obtain a Taxpayer's Card from the Tax Department at the Ministry of Finance. Contractors importing equipment and supplies related to public contracts may obtain a duty exemption from the Ministry of Finance only when the duties would count

as part of the Government's investment in the project. CEMAC has not created a regional licensing system.

Documentation Requirements

Cameroon requires a commercial invoice and a bill of lading for all imported goods. Shipping marks and numbers must match exactly those on the invoices and the goods. Three copies of the invoices are necessary for surface shipments, while four copies are necessary for air shipments. Documentation of bank transactions is required only if the value of the imported goods exceeds CFA 2,000,000 (approximately \$4,400). This is also true for pre-shipment inspection certificates, which require a "clean report of findings" from [SGS](#). For certain imports, such as second-hand clothing, certificates of non-infestation are also required. SGS officials have also introduced a new service fee for importing second-hand automobiles.

Certain categories of exports require special documentation. Coffee and cocoa exports must obtain a quality grade certification from one of two government-approved quality testing companies. Export licenses are also required for "strategic" products such as gold and diamonds, and for ecologically sensitive items (i.e., items governed by the CITES convention, including live animals and medicinal plants). The Government of Cameroon bans exports of some types of forest products as an environmental conservation measure.

A one-stop-shop for customs procedures became operational in December 2000. All documents must be submitted within 48 hours of a shipment's arrival. While at first this innovation reduced the time needed for processing of paperwork, delays attributed to corruption continue to hamper the process. The International Maritime Traffic Facilitation Committee is studying how to further reduce customs-related delays.

U.S. Export Controls

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As of February 2008, there were no specific exports control requirement for Cameroon.

Temporary Entry

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Temporary admission is permitted only to a few large importers wishing to sell on the Cameroonian market. A maximum of one year is allowed for storage, and a security bond is usually required. Storage fees are assessed from the date of landing. The importer pays customs duties on each batch of goods removed from storage until the entire stock is cleared. The government provides warehouses for temporary admission. Some large importers and freight forwarding companies also operate government-supervised warehouses for temporary admission.

Goods in transit to the landlocked countries of Chad, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of Congo are stored in the freight forwarder's warehouse with an amount equal to the value of assessed import tax held by Cameroonian Customs as a guarantee of re-export. The guarantee is released when the goods are removed from the warehouse for onward delivery to their destinations. SGS has initiated a new control system to verify that goods destined for transshipment are indeed delivered outside of Cameroon's territory.

Labeling and Marking Requirements

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Labeling and packaging requirements for canned products destined for Cameroon should have the manufacturing and expiration dates engraved or stamped on top of the container or packaging in clearly legible indelible ink. Dates should be preceded by short comments in French and/or English: "made in" and "to be consumed before." It is recommended that the label, written in both French and English, carry the following inscriptions: country of origin, the name and address of the manufacturer, the product name, the weight (metric system), and all ingredients, including salt.

It is compulsory to pre-label cigarettes that are to be sold in Cameroon. This label, in the form of a fiscal stamp, must be prepaid by an importer of cigarettes months before the shipment is made. It is also mandatory that cigarette packets bear the label "cigarette smoking can severely damage your health."

A new law requires that any genetically modified organism (GMO) or GMO product marketed in Cameroon must be packaged and labeled as such. Because the law is new, however, it has yet to be implemented, tested, or enforced.

Prohibited and Restricted Imports

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Prohibited imports include specific sanitary products, certain chemicals, toxic waste, some cosmetics, and some food items. The list of prohibited imports is subject to change. A complete list of prohibited imports is included in the publicly-distributed General Trade Schedule (GTS). American companies may obtain copies of the GTS from the Cameroonian Embassy in Washington.

For a comprehensive list of restricted products and further information on Cameroon Ports, please click [links in the Web resources](#).

Customs Regulations and Contact Information

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Customs duties in Cameroon are levied on the CIF value of the imported goods. Customs fraud is endemic in Cameroon, and protracted negotiations with customs officers are common over the value of imported goods that have not been subject to SGS valuation. In July 2001, Cameroon began implementing the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation. For further information, American exporters may contact the Director of Customs at (237) 33-42-32-02. Alternatively, they may contact [SGS](#) Control Services.

Standards

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Overview

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Standardization is at an early stage in Cameroon and is only partially regulated. The Department of Price Control, Weights and Measures is officially responsible for standards administration. Labels should be written in both French and English, and must include the country of origin as well as the name and address of the manufacturer. SGS may inspect the quality of any goods shipped into the country. In the absence of any specified domestic norm or standard, international norms and standards apply. In practice, imports are admitted into the country with little reference to standards or norms.

Standards

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The 2002 Investment Charter called for the creation of a government agency to oversee norms and quality, but the necessary implementing decrees had not been published and signed as of February 2008.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. Notify U.S. is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL:

<http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Conformity Assessment

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Cameroon does not have a government agency responsible for assessing Cameroon-specific norms and instead relies on international norms.

Product Certification

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Cameroon does not have a long track-record with product certification, but there is growing momentum towards certification of forestry products to strengthen sustainable exploitation of forest resources. In 1996, faced with the deteriorating quality of Cameroonian cocoa and coffee exports, the Government made it mandatory to certify the quality of these products before exportation.

Trade Agreements

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Cameroon has bilateral investment and/or commercial agreements with the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Similar agreements also exist with other countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. A Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between Cameroon and the United States was ratified in 1986 and entered into force in 1989. While the original time frame for the agreement was 10 years, it was renewed automatically under

the terms of the treaty. The U.S. invoked the BIT once in 1997, and Cameroon acquiesced in the case, not implementing legislation contrary to the treaty.

Web Resources

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For more information on Tariffs and taxes, visit:

http://www.export.gov/logistics/exp_001015.asp

For the official website (in French) of the Department of Taxation in the Ministry of Finance, visit:

www.impots.gov.cm

For a comprehensive list of restricted products and further information on Cameroon imports, visit:

<http://www.otal.com/cameroon/cameroonimports.htm>

For information (in French) on investing in the French Franc zone, visit:

<http://www.izf.net/izf/guide/Cameroun/Default.htm>

For U.S.-Cameroon Trade Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, visit:

<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c7420.html#2005>

For information on U.S. trade preferences for Africa, visit the USTR website:

http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Development/Preference_Programs/AGO_A/Section_Index.html

For a complete reading of the text of the US-Cameroon Bilateral Investment Treaty, visit:

[US-CAMEROON Bilateral Investment Treaty – PDF format](#)

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/43543.pdf>

http://bilaterals.org/IMG/html/US-CM_BIT.html

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Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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Openness to Foreign Investment

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The Government of Cameroon has sought to attract foreign investment in order to create much-needed economic growth and new employment. Nonetheless, the operating environment remains one of the most challenging in the world, and implementation of investment incentives and a more inviting business climate remains problematic.

Cameroon's legislative body, the National Assembly, adopted a new Investment Charter in April 2002 to attract international investors. As of January 2008, the 2002 Investment Charter had not been fully implemented because of delays in passing the necessary implementing legislation. The relevant portions of the 1990 Investment Code remain in effect until the full implementation of the 2002 Investment Charter.

Seeking to address business bottlenecks, in March 2007 Prime Minister Ephraim Inoni created the Prime Minister's Investment Council (PMIC),

which regrouped national business leaders and government officials into sector-specific working groups to propose concrete solutions to longstanding impediments to economic growth.

The government has announced the creation of an Investment Promotion Agency (intended to replace the Investment Code Management Unit, or ICMU), but it had not been established as of January 2008.

When the 2002 Investment Charter becomes operational, it will establish three procedures for government screening of both foreign and domestic investments. The “automatic regime” will permit investment without prior government approval. The “returns regime” will permit investment after an application and the passage of two days without government objection, while the “approval regime” will permit investment after an application and the passage of fifteen days. Pending issuance of implementing regulations, however, it is unclear which process will apply to which kind of investment.

In an attempt to render the Investment Charter operational, the government put in place 23 committees to draft separate sector codes. Some of the codes have already been adopted: the Forestry Sector Code (1994), the Petroleum Sector Code (1999), and the Mining Sector Code (2001). The 2008 sessions of the National Assembly are expected to address some of the remaining sector codes, including the Telecommunications Sector Code.

Cameroon continues to rank poorly (172 out of 178) in the area of “Enforcing Contracts” in the World Bank’s annual Doing Business Report.

Although the 1990 Investment Code places restrictions on foreign ownership on a reciprocal basis (by nationality), the 2002 Charter does not discriminate with regard to equity ownership, permitting 100 percent foreign ownership. Nonetheless, and especially in such a challenging operational environment, substantial local equity ownership may help facilitate the investment approval process. Investors who intend to make direct investments of 100 million CFA francs (approximately USD 220,000) or more must declare their intent to do so to the Ministry of Finance (MINFI) 30 days in advance.

Foreign bidders are permitted to participate in privatization programs, including the selection of a privatization consultant. Some privatization programs are managed jointly by the government and the World Bank. Some of Cameroon’s recent privatizations (since 2004) have suffered from a

lack of qualified bidders, and several of them have had to be postponed, sometimes indefinitely. Total privatizations are rare, as the government generally continues to hold 30-45 percent shares of “privatized” companies (though it is willing to reduce these ownership shares in most cases.) Buyers of some former state monopolies enjoy concession rights, thus limiting the entry of competitors in the sector for specified periods.

Conversion and Transfer Policies

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The unit of currency used in Cameroon is the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc. It is issued by the regional central bank, the Bank of Central African States (BEAC in French), and is shared with the other members of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC, the regional grouping of Chad, Central African Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and the Republic of Congo). Though on par with the West African CFA franc, the two currencies are not usually accepted for payment in each other’s zones. The French Treasury ensures that both kinds of CFA franc are easily convertible into Euros. Since 1999, the exchange rate has been fixed at 1 Euro to 665.957 CFA francs.

Dividends can be freely remitted abroad, as can capital return, interest and principal on foreign debt, lease payments, royalties and management fees, and returns on liquidation. Liquidation of foreign direct investment, however, must be declared at the Ministry of Finance (MINFI) and BEAC 30 days in advance. Also, commercial foreign exchange transfers must be authorized by MINFI for business deals amounting to more than 100 million francs CFA (about USD 220,000). For transactions below this amount the commercial banks are required to verify that the operations are genuine before proceeding with the transfer. These authorizations are routinely granted if they conform to investment and fiscal regulations, though the process takes an average of 12 days. The BEAC has introduced a newly-centralized computerized system for electronic transactions within the banking system. This new system (SYGMA is the French acronym), has handled transactions amounting to \$200,000 and above since September 2007. The system is also very useful in monitoring commercial banking compensations, succeeding in reducing transfer delays to twenty-four hours or one working day from the time the authorization has been granted.

Expropriation and Compensation

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Foreign and domestic investors receive legal guarantees that substantially comply with international norms, including full and prior compensation in the event of expropriation in the public interest. Undeveloped land is more at risk for local expropriation than developed property. There are no confiscatory tax regimes or laws that could be considered detrimental to American or other investments. The 2002 Investment Charter recognizes property rights and facilitates land acquisition. Cameroonian law does not require local ownership of land.

Dispute Settlement

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The 1990 Investment Code states that, at the time of incorporation or application for Investment Code benefits, a firm may choose one of several procedures: adjudication by local courts, arbitration by the international courts of justice, and international arbitration centers, according to Cameroonian law and the arbitration regimes of which Cameroon is a member (described below). Arbitration as a form of dispute settlement is gaining currency in Cameroon and should be considered by prospective foreign investors who wish to avoid entanglement in the court system. Under the 2002 Charter, petitions for redress or non-compliance with the provisions of the Charter should be forwarded to a Regulation and Competition Board, which was created in September 2004. Cameroon accepts binding international arbitration of investment disputes between foreign investors and the government.

Difficulty in resolving commercial disputes, particularly the enforcement of contractual rights, remains one of the serious obstacles in promoting investment in Cameroon. American claimants are often frustrated with the slow pace of the Cameroon legal system. Local businesses routinely exert pressure on the courts, which may be swayed by bribes or by the status of a political heavyweight. Some foreign companies have alleged that judgments against them were obtained fraudulently or as the result of frivolous lawsuits. The enforcement of judicial decisions is also slow and fraught with administrative and legal bottlenecks.

Cameroon's bankruptcy law is an integral part of its commercial law. In case of bankruptcy, negotiable, enforceable guarantee instruments cover creditors.

Cameroon is a member of the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID, also known as the Washington Convention), and is a signatory to the 1958 Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (also known as the New York Convention). In May 1997, Cameroon's Council of Business Managers and Professional Associations (GICAM), an association of 140 enterprises and 15 professional associations representing 70 percent of all formal sector business activity in the country, voted to create its own arbitration center to handle business disputes. In early 2001, CEMAC also established a court in N'djamena to adjudicate regional commercial disputes. Cameroon is a signatory to the Organization to Harmonize Business Laws in Africa Treaty (OHADA in French). Among other things, OHADA provides for a uniform business law and arbitration procedures in the 16-member signatory states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Cameroon is a signatory to the 1985 Seoul Convention that established the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), aimed at safeguarding non-commercial risks. Cameroon is also a signatory to the Lomé Convention (as revised in Mauritius in 1995), which created an arbitration mechanism to settle disputes between African, Caribbean, and Pacific states (ACP) and contractors, suppliers, and service providers financed by the European Development Fund (EDF).

Performance Requirements and Incentives

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Investment incentives are likely to change as the 2002 Investment Charter is implemented, until which time the relevant incentives for the 1990 Investment Code remain in effect. Depending on its size and nature, an investment will fall under one of four regimes of the 1990 Code, each of which has specific eligibility and performance requirements.

Under the "basic" regime, firms must export at least 25 percent of their annual production, use natural resources for at least 25 percent of the value of their inputs, and create at least one local job for every 10 million CFA francs invested (approximately \$22,000).

Benefits from the regime include an initial three-year, 15 percent reduction on many establishment taxes and customs fees as well as an exemption on purchase taxes relating to production and operational equipment. Eligible

companies are entitled to a number of exonerations and other exemptions for the next five years of the operational phase.

Under the small- and medium-scale enterprise (SME) regime, which applies to firms having total assets of less than 1.5 million CFA francs (\$3,300), there is no requirement for job creation. SME enterprises will receive the same benefits as listed above if they fulfill the SME regime.

Under the “strategic” regime, firms must export at least 50 percent of their annual production, use natural resources of at least 50 percent of the value of their inputs, and create at least one local job for every 20 million CFA francs invested (approximately \$44,000). Strategic companies will enjoy the same benefits as above for the first five years.

The reform of the taxation system in 1994 revoked almost all of the 1990 Investment Code’s tax incentives. Today, an investor can still apply for these different tax breaks, but in practice receiving exonerations from the tax and customs administrations is difficult.

Additionally, the Industrial Free Zone regime, which can apply at any location, grants broad exemptions from taxation and regulation, so long as 80 percent of production is exported. This provision of the 1990 Code is still in force, though it is unclear how the awaited implementation of the 2002 Investment Charter will affect it.

Procedures for enforcing the 1990 Investment Code’s performance requirements are not clearly defined. The government has not made any public statements concerning performance requirements and it is not yet clear how the provisions of the 2002 Investment Charter, once implemented, will affect these requirements.

No requirements for technology transfer or location in specific geographic areas exist. Foreign participation in government-financed and/or -subsidized programs is restricted to research and development programs that are beyond the technical capacity of Cameroonian firms. Visa, residence, and work permit requirements do not inhibit foreign investors.

Quantitative restrictions on imports, non-tariff protection, and many import licensing requirements were lifted by the 1994 Tariff Code to conform to CEMAC regional customs regulations. In addition, many other price

controls were abolished in 1998, and now remain only on “strategic” goods and services such as electricity, water, public transportation (roads), telecommunications, cooking gas, palm oil, imported fresh fish, pharmaceuticals, school books, and port-side activities (such as stevedoring).

Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

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The government recognizes the right of private ownership, but a dysfunctional judiciary, inadequate definitions of property rights, and widespread inconsistencies in government decision-making limit property rights in practice. The Ministry for Land Rights and Administration governs property issues. The procedures for obtaining land titles have been simplified and the authority decentralized. These documents can now be obtained at Divisional levels within a timeframe of six months. Foreign and domestic individuals and firms are legally entitled to establish and own firms; engage in remunerative activities; and establish, acquire and dispose of interests in business enterprises. Investors are permitted to dispose of their property via sale, transfer, or physical repatriation of moveable property.

Protection of Property Rights

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Secured interests in property are recognized and usually enforced. The concept of mortgage exists in Cameroonian law, and a title is the legal instrument for registering such security interests, but there is effectively no functioning system of mortgages because lenders are concerned they will be unable to enforce their claims on assets given as collateral. Cameroonian law provides foreign and domestic investors with property rights protections that substantially comply with international norms and do not discriminate between foreign and domestic firms. In practice, however, Cameroonian courts and administrative agencies often grant preferential treatment to domestic firms and have been accused of corrupt practices.

Cameroon is a member of the 16-nation African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI in French), which is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization and offers patent and trademark registration in cooperation with member states. Patents in Cameroon have an initial validity of 10 years. They can be renewed every 5 years upon submission of proof that the patent was used in at least one of the OAPI member countries. Without continued use, compulsory licensing is possible after 3 years.

Trademark protection is initially valid for 20 years with renewal possibilities every 10 years.

Cameroon is also a party to the Paris Convention on Industrial Property and the Universal Copyright Convention. The licensed copyright company (the Société Civile Nationale des Droits d'Auteurs) that formerly registered copyrights for music, books and periodicals, paintings, and theatrical productions is currently undergoing liquidation. In its place, new structures covering specific domains have been created, including: the Cameroon Music Corporation (CMC) for Musical Arts; the Copyright Corporation for Literature and Dramatic Arts (in French, SOCILADRA) for literature and software production; the Copyright Corporation for Visual Arts (in French, SOCADAP) for paintings; and the Copyright Corporation for Audio-Visual and Photographic Arts (in French, SOCIDRAP) for audiovisual and photographic production.

IPR enforcement is challenging due to the small size of the market, the cost of enforcement, rudimentary understanding of IPR among government officials and the population's lack of respect for intellectual property rights. U.S. industry complains that software piracy is widespread. Cameroon is taking steps to implement the World Trade Organization's TRIPS agreement. Trademarks and copyrights are routinely violated. With the assistance of the United States Patent and Trade Office (USPTO), Cameroonian officials (including customs officers, magistrates, and civil servants from the relevant ministries) continue to receive training in the domains of intellectual property, copyrights, and other intellectual property rights protection.

Transparency of Regulatory System

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While Cameroonian business laws are clear in theory, implementation of these laws can be challenging. Under the current judicial system, local and foreign investors (including some U.S. firms) have found it complicated, time-consuming, and costly to enforce contractual rights, protect property rights, obtain a fair and expeditious hearing before the courts, or defend themselves against frivolous lawsuits. Cameroon implemented the regulations of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) in 2000. While investors in Cameroon's Francophone provinces have commented positively on the effectiveness of OHADA's guidelines, implementation of OHADA's statutes has been more problematic

in Anglophone Cameroon, where there is still some disagreement in interpreting the OHADA statutes.

American, Cameroonian, and third-country firms complain that tax audits and enforcement are predatory and prejudiced against the private sector, especially government efforts to compel companies to compromise on tax assessments, including blocking company bank accounts for temporary periods. Under the 2002 Charter, taxation and customs enforcement mechanisms apply equally to all taxpayers. The government plans to simplify tax assessment and collection procedures and to ensure that they are transparent and clear to investors, but had not done so as of January 2008.

Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment [Return to top](#)

Interest rates are set by BEAC, which is closely monitored and regulated by the French Treasury. Foreign investors are able to obtain loans on the local market, but usually prefer to borrow offshore due to very high domestic interest rates and the unavailability of long-term capital in the domestic market. The Douala Stock Exchange (DSX) opened in April 2003, offering firms the opportunity to raise capital directly from domestic investors, but only one company (bottled water company Tangui) had been listed as of January 2008.

Cameroon has 12 fully operational commercial banks, with aggregate assets of over 1,600 billion CFA francs (USD 3.5 billion). Commercial banks and a wide network of micro-finance institutions constitute the largest part of the financial sector. The amount of non-performing assets they hold is unknown. Cameroon has a number of successful micro-finance institutions, with 436 operational countrywide, making an average annual deposit of 500 billion CFA (approximately USD 1 billion). The Central African Bank Commission (COBAC) has so far granted bank agreements to four of them, including Afriland First Bank, Amity Bank, Union Bank, and NFC Bank.

Mergers and takeovers are undertaken through discreet negotiations. Private firms are free to associate with any partner they choose and are free to organize industry associations. Cameroon's six privatization laws are complete, but have onerous bureaucratic requirements. The World Bank and the Cameroonian Government have jointly overseen the privatization of large companies.

Cameroon's legal and regulatory systems are inefficient and often arbitrary, and the government has not yet established a regulatory system to protect and encourage high-risk portfolio investments. Cameroonian partners of foreign firms have occasionally attempted to take over the operations of local companies via court action or through harassment and intimidation by government officials.

Political Violence

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There have been no incidents over the past few years involving politically motivated damages to projects and/or installations. The current political climate is fairly quiet and peaceful, although an on-going debate about President Biya's plans to change the Constitution has the potential to result in some demonstrations or social unrest. A new cabinet was appointed on September 7, 2007 following municipal and parliamentary elections in July 2007.

There are no nascent insurrections in Cameroon. Thanks to UN mediation and the June 2006 Greentree Agreement, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on the Bakassi dispute with Nigeria is now being implemented. Relations with Nigeria are increasingly friendly. However, 21 Cameroonian soldiers died following an attack of unidentified assailants on November 12, 2007 in Bakassi.

Social unrest, fuelled by high levels of poverty and declining standards of health and education services, has been on the rise in Cameroon. One sign of discontent was the November 2007 attempted strike by civil servants who wanted salary increases and better working conditions. In two separate incidents in 2007, public protests fueled by anger over unexpected power cuts led to violence, including property damage and casualties.

Corruption

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Corruption is endemic in Cameroon. Cameroon regularly ranks among the most corrupt countries in both Transparency International's index of the private sector's perceptions of corruption and its survey of the public's experiences with corrupt activity. Persons accused of corruption by the local press are seldom called to account before the courts, but this is changing. The government signed the U.N. Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in April 2004 and ratified it in 2006. In November 2004 it published new

anti-corruption measures on public contracts. With the assistance of international organizations and financial institutions, Cameroon has undertaken several anti-corruption and good governance initiatives. There have been some high profile dismissals, public exposure of apparent corruption, indictments and prosecutions, but much remains to be done.

Government reforms in the public procurement process began in 2002 when observers were installed to perform systematic ex-post-facto audits on valuable procurements. Nonetheless, governance of the public procurement process remains problematic.

Corruption is a criminal offense in Cameroon, and punishment can include imprisonment (5 years to life) and a fine (\$400 to \$4,000). Sectors with high corruption potential include government procurement, customs, and public health facilities.

Bilateral Investment Agreements

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Cameroon has bilateral investment and/or commercial agreements with the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Similar agreements also exist with other countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. A Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between Cameroon and the United States was ratified in 1986 and entered into force in 1989. While the original time frame for the agreement was 10 years, it was renewed automatically under the terms of the treaty. The U.S. invoked the BIT both in 1997 and 2004, and Cameroon acquiesced in both cases, agreeing not to implement legislation contrary to the treaty.

OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

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The U.S. government signed an Investment Guarantee Agreement with Cameroon in 1967. OPIC has been receptive to American firms seeking war, expropriation, and inconvertibility insurance, and has guaranteed several ventures in Cameroon. The 1990 Investment Code guarantees protection from non-commercial risk, and Cameroon is a signatory of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agreement (MIGA).

Labor

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Cameroon's labor-management relations are governed by the 1992 Labor Code, which restored collective bargaining in wage negotiations, eliminated fixed wage scales, abolished employment-based requirements on education levels, eliminated government control over layoffs and firings, and reduced the government's role in the management of labor unions. The Labor Code does not apply to civil servants, employees of the judiciary, and workers responsible for national security. Though the government passed implementation decrees in 1993, the decrees remain open to legal interpretation and labor disputes are still common. In theory, the Labor Code provides a legal framework for the emergence of a flexible and efficient labor market, but such a market has not emerged.

After a long period of dissension between the government and labor unions, a new tripartite approach is being used to address labor issues. The tripartite approach includes worker and employer unions as well as government representatives. This method has substantially improved relations between the parties for the benefit of both the workers and the employers, and the government intends to further improve workers' rights and establish a new concept of internal discussions within companies before workers resort to strikes. The Minister of Labor and Social Security refers to this policy as "Social Dialogue." The Ministry of Labor has taken an increasingly broad view of certain aspects of the Labor Code, especially regarding payment of "legal rights" to employees in the event of a restructuring or sale.

Cameroon has a high literacy rate and offers a relatively well-educated labor force alongside a surplus of unskilled and non-technical labor. According to a 2005 survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics in the two major cities, Yaounde and Douala, the unemployment rates (ILO criteria) in these cities are 14.7 percent and 12.5 percent, respectively. (ILO defines an unemployed person as one who fulfills three conditions: a) is without work, i.e. not having work a single hour in a reference week; b) is available for work in the coming 15 days; and c) is actively seeking employment or having found one that will start later.) About 50 percent of adult Cameroonians speak both French and English. Due to inadequate vocational and technical training, however, some industries have experienced difficulties in recruiting skilled labor in the domestic market. Also, the ready availability of unskilled labor means that technology used in many sectors, especially construction, remains basic.

Cameroon is a party to ILO Conventions 87 and 98 permitting the freedom to form unions and the right to collective bargaining.

An individual raising a discrimination case against an employer may elect to bring the case either in the town where the individual resides or where the individual works. In practice most of these cases are filed in the complainant's place of residence. This compels the company to dispatch officials to sometimes distant places where the individual might have better local contacts than the company.

In recent years, Section 42 of the Cameroon Labor Code has posed some challenges to foreign companies selling their assets in Cameroon, notably to Shell and Mobil as they sold their service station chains. Section 42(2)(b) allows employees or their labor organizations to demand compensation from the selling entity in advance of the sale of the asset. They may ask for termination of their contract and severance pay prior to the transfer, knowing that the new acquirer would still hire them or would need their acquired experience and service. This is seen as detrimental to foreign investment, especially in sectors where human resource costs are high, as it can make it difficult to disinvest.

Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports

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While Cameroon presently has no designated foreign trade zones or free ports, it has an Industrial Free Zone (IFZ) regime applicable at any location through "industrial parks" or "single-factory" zones. Created in 1990 to promote internationally competitive export industries, the IFZ regime creates certain broad regulatory and tax exemptions for investors. It is unclear how the 2002 Investment Charter will affect IFZ regime privileges.

To qualify for IFZ status, the goods or services produced by an enterprise must not have detrimental effects on the environment, and 80 percent of production must be exported. IFZ firms receive a 10-year exemption from taxes and are subject only to a flat tax of 15 percent on corporate profits beginning in the eleventh year. They have a right to tax-free repatriation of all funds earned and invested in Cameroon and are exempt from foreign exchange regulations. They are also exempt from existing and future customs duties and taxes, including those on locally purchased production inputs. The National Agency for Industrial Free Zones is the non-profit

regulatory body established to oversee and administer Cameroon's IFZ program.

Though well-intentioned, the IFZ regime has never really been implemented since its original sponsor (the USAID mission in Cameroon) closed in 1994. At inception there was strong opposition to the program from one major European partner that feared the IFZ would cut into its trade with Cameroon. Attempts to apply the IFZ to timber mills prompted strong opposition from the World Bank and an audit to determine whether timber mills are eligible for such preferential tax treatment. (The results are not yet known.)

Foreign Direct Investment Statistics

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Though Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) clearly plays a key role in the Cameroonian economy, accurate FDI statistics are not available. Neither the government nor the Chamber of Commerce has compiled a comprehensive list of foreign investments in Cameroon or estimates of current values. While France is commonly seen as the main economic player in Cameroon, French foreign direct investment in Cameroon is actually smaller than that of the United States. The role of American investors is particularly strong in the energy sector, as noted below. Furthermore, with the sale of former French interests like the ALUCAM facilities in Edea to the Anglo-Australian group Rio Tinto, and the Meridien hotel chain to the U.S. group Starwood, French investments in Cameroon are declining. Meanwhile, American investment appears to be rising on the basis of a number of pending U.S. investments in the mining and hotel sectors.

U.S. trade with Cameroon is on the rise again after two years of stagnation. The U.S. goods trade deficit with Cameroon was \$41 million in 2007*, a change of \$112 million from the \$153 million deficit in 2006. U.S. goods exports in 2007* were \$128 million, up 6.4 percent from the previous year. Corresponding U.S. imports from Cameroon were \$169 million*, down 38.2 percent. (Note: *Annualized 9 month data). Cameroon is currently the 130th* largest export market for U.S. goods. Major French export products are pharmaceutical products, a market in which France holds 70% of the Cameroon market share and where the U.S. is totally absent. Last year, French exports in this category amounted to \$ 83 million.

The French Embassy in Yaounde reports that the stock of French foreign direct investment in Cameroon came to 417 million euros in 2002, the most

recent year for which statistics are available. (At the 2005 exchange rate, that equaled approximately USD 542 million.) According to the French Embassy, this figure accounted for one-third of all FDI in Cameroon in 2002. In the USTR's recently published National Trade Estimate, the stock of U.S. foreign direct investment in Cameroon in 2003 was USD 3.7 billion, up from USD 2.8 billion in 2002.

The majority of American business activity is in Cameroon's petroleum sector. The Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which runs over 1000 kilometers from Chad's Doba oil fields to the sea at Kribi, is the largest U.S. investment in sub-Saharan Africa, estimated at USD 4.4 billion. Exxon/Mobil and Chevron/Texaco jointly hold a majority interest in the pipeline company, with Petronas of Malaysia as their partner; this single project accounts for the lion's share of American investment in Cameroon. Downstream, Mobil and Texaco have extensive retail networks to sell refined petroleum products, especially gasoline. Texaco recently bought all of Shell's distribution networks in Cameroon; Exxon-Mobil has sold its retail network to TAMOIL of Libya.

Outside of the petroleum sector, U.S.-based AES Corporation owns a majority stake in SONEL, the privatized national power producer and distributor. American entity Dole has equity in a French firm that produces bananas and pineapples for export, while Delmonte, which has a U.S. equity stake, produces bananas. Colgate-Palmolive produces oral care/hygiene products for the local and regional markets at its Cameroon plant. In April 2003, the government awarded a permit to Geovic, a U.S. mining firm, to extract rich deposits of cobalt and nickel in Cameroon's East Province. Mining should begin in the coming years and has the potential to make Cameroon a leading producer of cobalt. Additionally, several dozen U.S. companies are currently represented in Cameroon either directly or through agents or distributors.

Despite its declining investment, France is still a major economic partner in Cameroon. In the banking sector, out of twelve operating banks, three are majority French-owned. French interests are present in sugar production plants and in the French telecommunications firm Orange, which operates one of Cameroon's three GSM mobile telephone companies. French interests are also found in Camrail, the privatized rail network, alongside a majority South African stake. In all, there are more than 160 French branch companies in Cameroon employing some 30,000 people, and more than 200

enterprises owned by French nationals. The state owned telecommunication corporation CAMTEL and the South Africa's MTN operate Cameroon's other mobile telephone companies. A South African group has also acquired the Cameroon Development Corporation's tea sector and is now known as Cameroon Tea Estates (CTE).

Web Resources

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Commercial Website of the Embassy of France in Cameroon:

<http://www.ambafrance-cm.org/html/camfra/econo/fracamec.htm>

To view the Heritage Foundation's Ranking of Cameroon's Economic Freedom, visit:

[Index of Economic Freedom 2006 - Cameroon](#)

For the Federation of International Trade Association's (FITA) website, visit:

[Cameroon Country Profile, International Trade Leads, Global Import Export - Fita.org, trade market resources and research](#)

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Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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- [How Does the Banking System Operate](#)
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How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)

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Importers and exporters use internationally accepted methods of settlement. Due to pervasive credit risks -- even in the banking and public sectors -- many U.S. firms exporting to Cameroon insist on irrevocable letters of credit drawn on banks with strong foreign partners.

How Does the Banking System Operate

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The Bank of Central African States (BEAC in French), the central bank for the six member countries of the CEMAC zone, oversees Cameroon's banking system and is supervised by the French Treasury, which guarantees the CFA at a rate of 665.957 to 1 Euro. Cameroon must hold at least 60 percent of its foreign reserves in an account in Paris that is managed by the French Treasury. The banking sector within CEMAC is regulated by the Central African Banking Committee (COBAC), housed in BEAC's offices in Yaounde.

Cameroon has 12 fully operational commercial banks, with aggregate assets of 1,600 billion CFA francs (about \$3.5 billion). BEAC sets interest rates for its member states. After more than a decade of restructuring, Cameroon's banking system is more solid but is still plagued by the unwillingness on the part of many bankers to take risks, a lack of modern banking products, and a generally low quality of service. The presence of an American bank -- Citibank -- has made financial transactions much easier for U.S. companies.

Foreign-Exchange Controls

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Foreign exchange controls exist in Cameroon primarily for statistical purposes and to enable the Ministry of Finance to certify that remittances conform to established regulations. Administrative approvals for foreign transfers are not requested below \$215,000. Above that limit, banks only need to secure clearance after the transfer has been executed.

U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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The only American bank operating in Cameroon as of February 2008 was Citibank. A number of Cameroonian banks have correspondent status with other American financial institutions.

Citibank Cameroon, S.A. (Douala)
96, Rue Flatters, B.P. 4571
Douala, Cameroon
Tel.: (237) 33-42-42-72
Fax: (237) 33-42-40-74

Citibank Cameroon, S.A. (Yaounde)
487, Avenue Charles de Gaulle, B.P. 7324
Yaounde, Cameroon
Tel.: (237) 22-21-27-77
Fax: (237) 22-21-27-67

Project Financing

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Foreign investors can obtain local financing for investment and trade purposes at non-discriminatory terms. However, most foreign investors prefer to borrow from foreign sources due to Cameroon's comparatively high interest rates. Because local sources of commercial credit are extremely limited, liberal credit terms may be more appealing to a potential buyer than other factors. Firms competing with American companies often grant credits of 180 days for consumer goods and 24 months for small machinery and equipment. European banks often quote liberal terms, and may discount paper for their exporters who are pursuing long-term credits.

Project financing is available through multilateral financial institutions. The World Bank has a resident representative in Yaounde, and its affiliate, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), maintains a regional office in Douala for borrowers in Central Africa. The IFC committed \$100 million

from its own account and mobilized another \$100 million in commercial financing for the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project. It also provided a \$12 million credit enhancement facility to one of Cameroon's mobile telephone operators. The African Development Bank (ADB) and the African Development Fund (ADF) have financed agricultural, industrial, and infrastructure projects in both the public and private sectors. In June 2003, the ADB agreed to finance \$45 million worth of the \$200 million to move the state-owned shipyard (Chantier Naval et Industriel du Cameroun) from Douala Port to a modern facility for repairing ships and oil platforms at Limbe. On December 21, 2006, AES-SONEL, the privatized power producer and distributor, secured a loan from the IFC and some other multilateral financial institutions worth over \$340 million to finance investments in the electricity sector. OPIC has approved \$42 million in financing for the construction of a Marriott Hotel in Douala.

The [Export-Import Bank of the United States \(Ex-Im\)](#) has stepped up its effort to help U.S. exporters expand their markets in Africa, providing short- and medium-term financing for private sector transactions in Cameroon, as well as short-term financing for public-sector transactions. Ex-Im Bank backs a wide range of projects in Cameroon, from the very large (\$300 million in financing for the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Project) to the very small (\$250,000 to a Douala printer to purchase computers from the U.S.). Ex-Im Bank has backed loans for Cameroonian firms to purchase trucks and construction equipment. Also, the [Overseas Private Investment Corporation \(OPIC\)](#) can insure and finance investments in Cameroon.

Web Resources

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Export-Import Bank of the United States:

<http://www.exim.gov>

Country Limitation Schedule:

http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html

Overseas Private Investment Corporation:

<http://www.opic.gov>

U.S. Trade and Development Agency:

<http://www.tda.gov/>

The Small Business Association's Office of International Trade:

<http://www.sba.gov/oit/>

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/cc/default.htm>

African Development Bank:

<http://www.afdb.org/>

International Finance Corporation:

<http://www.ifc.org/>

World Bank (IDA):

<http://www.ciesin.org/IC/wbank/IDA.html>

Islamic Development Bank:

<http://www.isdb.org/>

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Business Customs

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Although Cameroon has the largest private sector in French-speaking Central Africa, its business community does not necessarily follow Western behavior patterns. Cameroonians appreciate an opportunity to “get to know” potential partners before beginning concrete discussions. It is helpful in Cameroon to supplement written communication with as many face-to-face encounters as possible. Adherence to Western standards of punctuality is not the norm; patience and persistence are needed to do business in Cameroon. In professional settings, Cameroonians always dress in “*tenue de ville*,” the French reference to business suits.

Travel Advisory

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Americans considering traveling to Cameroon are urged to consult the Department of State’s latest Consular Information Sheet (CIS) for Cameroon. The CIS, which is updated periodically, may be obtained by calling the State Department’s American Citizen Services Center at (202) 647-5225 or (202) 647-0900 or by visiting the Department of State’s Web sites <http://travel.state.gov/> and <http://www.state.gov/travelandbusiness/>. American citizens residing in Cameroon are urged to register with the [Consular Section](#) at the American Embassy in Yaounde.

There are many restaurants in Douala and Yaounde that serve a variety of cuisines, including Cameroonian, French, Chinese, Italian, Vietnamese,

Indian, Japanese, etc. Some restaurants and hotels in Douala and Yaounde accept European and American credit cards, but credit card users should exercise the usual caution and cash (in dollars or local currency) is required at most shops and restaurants. Visa cardholders may obtain cash at a number of ATM machines operated by international banks in Douala and Yaounde.

Many streets in Cameroon do not have names or numbered addresses. Consequently, most businesses, hotels, restaurants, government offices, and individuals do not have street addresses. Mail is usually sent to a post office box (in French, a “boite postale,” abbreviated as “B.P.”). In spite of increased costs, international organizations and private businesses often use express mail services (including Federal Express, UPS, EMS, and DHL) rather than submit to the lengthy delivery times endemic to regular mail service in Cameroon.

Villas and other residential houses are available for lease in most towns in Cameroon. Apartments are also available for lease in Douala and Yaounde. Rates are increasing, particularly in the major cities. While a real estate broker (“agent immobilier” in French) may help secure housing for American visitors, a good local contact may be more useful. Many American businesspeople find temporary housing as well as office space at the higher-end hotels.

Visa Requirements

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Visas and return tickets are required for entry into Cameroon. Visas may be obtained at the Cameroonian Embassy in the U.S. (2349 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, tel.: (202) 265-8790) or in France (73, rue d’Auteuil, 75016 Paris, tel.: (33) 1-46-51-88-00). Visitors who arrive without a visa may not be allowed to enter the country, especially if they are arriving from a country with Cameroonian diplomatic representation. Information on visa and immigration procedures can be found at the following link: http://www.passportsplus.com/visa_cameroon.html

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that not all Cameroonian nationals are easily able to obtain visas to the United States. Visa applicants should go to the following links:

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

United States Visas.gov: <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

US Embassy Consular Section, Yaounde, Cameroon:
http://yaounde.usembassy.gov/visa_services.html

Telecommunications

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Cameroon and the United States have a direct telephone link via satellite. Cameroon's country code is 237. All telephone numbers have eight digits; there are no specific city or area codes. Cameroon has facsimile and telex services. There are two private mobile telephone companies currently operating in Cameroon: the French-owned Orange and the South African-owned MTN. The state-owned telecommunication company, CAMTEL, and its Chinese partner, HUEWEI, recently introduced 3rd generation Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) telephones into the communications landscape. All the mobile phone companies operate on the GSM 900 and 1500 standard with mobile Internet-access facilities. Camtel also provides Internet access, as do several private companies, and there are Internet cafes in cities and larger towns. There is increasing access to the Internet even in some rural areas.

Transportation

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The main business centers, Yaounde and Douala, are easily accessible by paved roads from Bamenda in the Northwest Province, Bafoussam in the West Province, and Cameroon's two main seaside towns, Kribi and Limbe. A paved 510 kilometer road links the three major northern cities of Ngaoundere, Garoua, and Maroua. However, the stretch linking the northern and southern parts of Cameroon is punctuated by long segments of unpaved roads. Regular bus service is available between Yaounde, Douala, Limbe, Bafoussam, and Bamenda. While this may be recommended during daytime travel, road travel should be avoided at night due to frequent road accidents. In addition, highway armed robbery is a problem in certain regions of the country, especially after dark. It is advisable to complete motor travel between towns during daylight hours. Cars are available for rental in Douala and Yaounde and other smaller cities like Bamenda, Bafoussam, and Limbe. Visitors can hire taxicabs in most towns and cities. Due to rampant crimes

in taxis, however, the Embassy does not recommend this mode of transportation.

Cameroon's railway and airline services link the southern and northern zones at a northern terminal in Ngaoundere. There are three domestic passenger airlines: Cameroon Airlines Company (Camairco), National Airway Cameroon, and Elysian Air. Delays and short-notice cancellations are endemic with internal airline services. Flights between Douala, Yaounde, Bertoua, Bafoussam, Ngaoundere, Garoua, and Maroua are available, but passengers should avoid booking the last flights on any given day as these are often cancelled. Passengers should also arrive at the airport early in order to improve their chances of receiving a boarding pass. Cameroon has an individually-assessed airport departure tax of 10,000 CFA (approximately \$22.00) for international flights and 500 CFA (approximately \$1.10) for domestic flights.

Language

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Although both French and English are official languages in Cameroon, at least two-thirds of the population speaks French, which is the dominant business language. A majority of professional Cameroonians understand, even though they may not speak, both languages. Pidgin English is a local lingua franca in the two English speaking provinces of Cameroon and is widely used in several parts of Cameroon. The staff at most hotels and restaurants are usually bilingual.

Health

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All visitors entering Cameroon are required to present evidence of a yellow fever vaccination received within the last ten years on a valid World Health Organization (WHO) International Health Immunization Certificate. The certificate must be presented upon arrival and departure from Cameroon. Medical evacuation insurance is recommended for all visitors to Cameroon. Vaccinations against tetanus, typhoid, polio, meningitis, and hepatitis A and B are recommended. Cameroon has chloroquine- and fansidar-resistant malaria. Americans are urged to take appropriate malaria prophylactic medication and to use insect repellents. Travelers should explore options for traveler's health insurance, including provisions for evacuation and emergency procedures.

Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays

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Cameroon local time reads Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) +1. The statutory Cameroonian workweek is Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with a half-hour lunch break that usually falls between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. White-collar workers usually do not work on Saturdays, though businesses are open that day. Government offices are officially open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. without interruption, but in reality shorter hours and longer lunch breaks are the norm. Businesses are usually open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and close for lunch for 1-2 hours.

The following Cameroonian national holidays are scheduled on fixed calendar days: January 1 (New Year's Day), February 11 (Youth Day), May 1 (Labor Day), May 20 (National Day), August 15 (Assumption Day) and December 25 (Christmas Day). Cameroon's religious holidays fall on unspecified calendar dates and include Good Friday, Ascension Day, Feast of the Lamb, and the end of Ramadan. Holidays that fall on a Sunday are observed on Monday. When a workday falls between two non-workdays (public holidays) it is declared a public holiday at the discretion of the President of the Republic, sometimes even on short notice. Sunday is the only official non-workday.

Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings

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The temporary entry of goods is allowed, provided the traveler can justify that the goods are personal effects. It is not necessary to pay customs duties on these items (with the exception of motor vehicles, for which there is a special importation procedure).

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State Department Visa Website:

<http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

United States Visas.gov:

<http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

United States Embassy Cameroon:

<http://yaounde.usembassy.gov/>

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Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research, and Trade Events

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Contacts

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Visit our [website!](#)

The U.S. Commercial Section at the U.S. Embassy in Yaounde:

Scott B. Ticknor
Chief
Political and Economic Section
22-20-15-00

Clinton S. “Tad” Brown
Deputy Chief
Political and Economic Section
22-20-15-00
BrownCS@state.gov

Jean Paul Yana
Commercial Specialist
Political and Economic Section
22-20-15-00
YanaJP@state.gov

Christopher Ekom
Commercial Specialist
Political and Economic Section
EkomCA@state.gov

The U.S. Embassy’s Embassy Branch Office in Douala:

Robert Heater
EBO Director

33-42-53-31

Olivier Tchamake
Commercial Specialist
33-42-53-31
TchamakeBO@state.gov

The Government of Cameroon official websites:

Presidency of the Republic: <http://www.prc.cm/>
Prime Minister's Office: <http://www.spm.gov.cm/>

Market Research

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To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service, visit:

<http://www.export.gov/marketresearch.html>

and click on Country and Industry Market Reports. Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration to the site is required, but free of charge.

Trade Events

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Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events:

<http://www.export.gov/tradeevents.html>

For information on trade events in Cameroon, please click on link below:

<http://www.promote2008.org/>
<http://www.biztradeshows.com/trade-events/expo-cameroon.html>

For information on trade missions organized by the U.S. Embassy Commercial Section, please click on link below:

<http://yaounde.usembassy.gov>

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Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help your business enter and succeed in markets worldwide. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers U.S. businesses, please click on the link below.

<http://yaounde.usembassy.gov>

In addition, a United States Regional Commercial Service (USCS) and a Foreign Agricultural Service (USFAS), (both located in Dakar) provide expertise to those considering doing business in Cameroon.

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U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information should consult with their nearest **Export Assistance Center** or the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRADE**, or go to the following website:

<http://www.export.gov>

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate as of the date published. However, **The Department of Commerce** does not take responsibility for actions readers may take based on the information contained herein. Readers should always conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures or other commercial arrangements. **The Department of Commerce** can assist companies in these endeavors.