



CAMEROON

SUMMARY

Cameroon is a bicameral parliamentary republic with two levels of government, national and local (regions and councils). There is constitutional provision for local government, as well as for an intermediary higher territorial tier (regions), although this has yet to be implemented. The main laws governing local government are Law No. 2004/17 on the Orientation of Decentralization, Law No. 2004/18 on Rules Applicable to Councils, and Law No. 2004/19 on Rules Applicable to Regions. The Ministry of Decentralization and Local Government is responsible for government policy on territorial administration and local government. There are 374 local government councils, consisting of 360 municipal councils and 14 city councils. There are also 45 district sub-divisions within the cities. Local councils are empowered to levy taxes and charges including direct council taxes, cattle tax and licences. The most important mechanism for revenue-sharing is the Additional Council Taxes levy on national taxation, of which 70% goes to the councils. All councils have similar responsibilities and powers for service delivery with the exception of the sub-divisional councils, which have a modified set of powers. Council responsibility for service delivery includes utilities, town planning, health, social services and primary education.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Cameroon is a unitary republic with a bicameral parliament.^{10.1a} The head of state is the president, who is directly elected by universal adult suffrage for an unlimited number of seven-year terms. The parliament is called Assemblée Nationale. The president appoints the head of government, the prime minister. The Assemblée Nationale is elected every five years on a direct universal suffrage basis. It has 180 members and sits three times a year, for a maximum of 30 days per sitting. An upper chamber, known as the Senate, was constituted in 2013 and comprises 100 senators who sit for a five-year term. There are 70 elected senators, ten from each of the seven regions, who are elected by the councillors of the 360 municipal councils. There are also 30 senators appointed by the president - with a minimum of three from each region. Following the 2013 national elections, 31.1% (56/180) of elected representatives, and from March 2018 26.0% (26/100) of senators, were women.^{10.1b}

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions

Section 55 (2) of the constitution^{10.2a} states that regional and local authorities shall have administrative and financial autonomy and shall be freely administered by elected councils.

2.2 Main legislative texts

- Law No. 2004/17 of July 2004 on the Orientation of Decentralization^{10.2b}
- Law No. 2004/18 of July 2004 comprising Rules Applicable to Councils
- Law No. 2004/19 of July 2004 comprising Rules Applicable to Regions.

Other decrees and laws relating to local government include:

- Law No. 1987/015: sets up city councils
- Decree 1987/1365: City Council of Yaoundé

- Decree 1987/1366: City Council of Douala
- Law 2009/019 on the Local Fiscal System
- Law 2012/001 on the Electoral Code, as amended by Law 2012/017.

2.3 Proposed legislative changes

No legislative changes are proposed.

2.4 Traditional leadership

Local chiefs are auxiliaries of the local administration and chiefs are permitted to, and often do, take part in local elections. They also play an important role in encouraging people to turn out to vote.

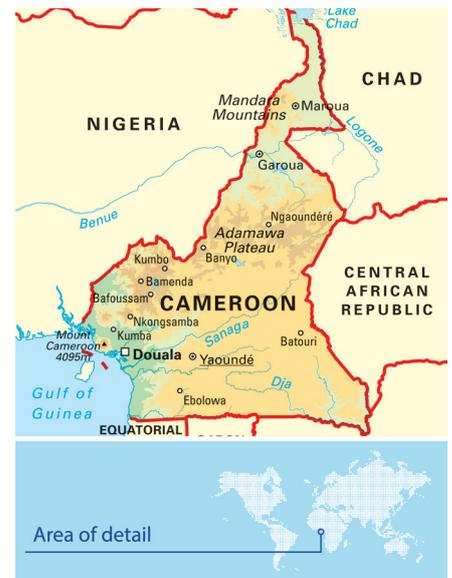
2.5 National urban policy

Following the signing of the UN's New Urban Agenda by the Government of Cameroon in 2016, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has started to develop a national urban policy. A cross-government workshop held in May 2017^{10.2c} identified eight critical factors for success in developing a national urban policy for Cameroon. These included: linking national urban policy to territorial planning; supporting evidence-based policy-making; linking the national urban policy to the Cameroon 'Vision 2035'; continuous capacity development of actors including senior officials; working with various 'champions' and change agents to promote transformational leadership; taking into account culture and diversity; aiming at better management of land; and adopting, smart, urban development approaches.

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state

Cameroon is divided into ten administrative regions. Regions are in turn divided into divisions (départements), which are further divided into sub-divisions (arrondissements), which correspond to the 374 local government councils.



KEY FACTS

POPULATION (2020 estimate):

26,635,592

AREA (UN 2012):

475,442 sq km

CAPITAL:

Yaoundé

CURRENCY:

Central Africa Franc (XAF)

EXECUTIVE HEAD OF STATE:

President Paul Biya

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:

Prime Minister Joseph Ngute

FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

republic

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:

bicameral

STATE STRUCTURE:

unitary

LANGUAGES:

French and English (official)

NATIONAL ELECTIONS:

National assembly:

last: Feb 2020, turnout: 43.8%; next: 2027

Presidential:

last: Oct 2018, turnout: 82.2% next: 2025

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2020):

33.9%

LOCAL ELECTIONS:

last: Feb 2020, turnout: 43.8%; next: 2027

WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2013):

~28.0%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government budget 2015/16:

2.9%

Table 10.1a Distribution of councils and population

Region	Councils	Cities	City sub-divisions (district)	Population (2005 Census)	Population (2017 estimate)	% rural (2005 Census)
Adamawa	22	1	3	884,289	1,182,998	61.2
Centre	71	1	7	3,098,044	4,147,506	28.1
East	33	1	2	771,755	1,033,370	63.5
Far North	48	1	3	3,11,792	4,166,210	77.6
Littoral	34	3	11	2,510,263	3,359,620	7.4
North	22	1	3	1,687,959	2,258,450	72.1
North West	35	1	3	1,728,953	2,302,871	62.9
West	41	1	3	1,720,047	2,104,146	57.4
South	21	2	4	634,655	848,672	64.2
South West	33	2	6	1,316,079	1,844,201	57.5
TOTAL	360	14	45	17,463,836	23,248,044	51.2

Source: MDLG communication with CLGF, 2005 Census^{10.3a} and the National Institute of Statistics population estimates^{10.3b}

The 2008 constitutional amendments made provision for an intermediate regional level of local government, but this has yet to be implemented.

3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development^{10.3c} ('MINDDEVEL') was created by Presidential Decree on the 2nd of March 2018. The ministry is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating government policy on decentralisation, as well as promoting local government. MINDLEVEL is also the supervisory authority of the state-owned Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance ('FEICOM') National Civil Status Registration Office ('BUNEC') and the Local Government Training Centre, CEFAM.

3.3 Council types

There are three main types of councils: city councils, sub-divisional councils (within a city council), and councils.

3.3.1 Councils lack the status granted to city councils. All councils are headed by a directly elected mayor who is supported by a team of councillors; their number depends on the population size. The council can appoint commissions to work on any relevant issues, and membership can include non-councillors and must be convened during the council's first year. Typically, their remit would include planning, public works, education, markets and other facilities, or health.

3.3.2 City councils serve urban areas, their territory overarches that of sub-divisional councils. They are headed by government delegates appointed by the president who mirror all the duties and powers of mayors. They are assisted by an executive team composed of persons appointed by order of the president.

The deliberative body of the city council comprises the executive team, the sub-divisional council mayors and one additional councillor designated by each of the sub-divisional councils.

3.3.3 Sub-divisional councils are council areas created within any city council area. Most city councils have two or three sub-divisional council areas, but Yaoundé and Douala have seven and six respectively. The sub-divisional councils are headed by directly elected mayors.

4. ELECTIONS

All elections are managed and supervised by Elections Cameroon ('ELECAM').^{10.4} ELECAM has regional and divisional representatives, and at divisional level the preparation and conduct of elections is overseen by divisional supervisory commissions.

4.1 Recent local elections

The most recent local elections were held on February 9th 2020 with a turnout of 43.8%, down from 76.8% in 2013.

4.2 Voting system

Councillors are elected by universal suffrage with elections taking place according to a mixed list system. The leader of the council is a mayor who is elected by and from amongst the councillors.

4.3 Elected representatives

The mayor is supported by councillors, whose number varies according to the constituency population as follows:

- less than 50,000: 25 councillors
- 50,000-100,000: 31 councillors;
- 100,001-200,000: 35 councillors;
- 200,001-300,000: 41 councillors;
- over 300,000: 61 councillors.

4.4 Women's representation

Following the 2013 elections, around 28% of councillors were women, up from around 1.5% following the 2009 election (see Table 10.1b). The number of female chairpersons/mayors following the 2013 elections was 9.1% (30/330), also up, from 3.9% (14/345) in 2009. The number of female deputies following the 2013 election was 33.2% (332/1,000). (Awaiting data for 2020.)

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Legal requirement

The National Programme of Participatory Development ('PNDP') was set up in 2005 in collaboration with the World Bank^{10.5a} and other development partners. Building on this, there is strong participation by communities in the drawing up of a council's development plan.

5.2 Implementation

In its second phase (2010-2013), the PNDP provided a funding mechanism to strengthen the capacities of councils in local development. The third phase's focuses on strengthening local public finance management and participatory development processes in councils for the delivery of quality and sustainable social and economic infrastructure. The Pan African Institute has been on the PNDP project since its inception in 2011 and has contributed substantially to the successful implementation in some parts of the country.

5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

No information available.



Table 10.1b Elected women representatives following the last two election periods

Women elected representatives	2009-2013		2013-2017	
	#	%	#	%
Councillors				
Female councillors	149	~1.5	na	~28.0
Male councillors	~9,851	~98.5	na	~72.0
Total councillors	~10,000	100.0	na	100.0
Mayors/chairpersons				
Female mayors/chairpersons	14	3.9	30	9.0
Male mayors/chairpersons	345	96.1	330	91.0
Total mayors/chairpersons	359	100.0	360	100.0

~ = approximate Source: MDLG communication with CLGF

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6.1 National local government association

The United Councils and Cities of Cameroon¹⁰⁶ (UCCC) was formed from the merger of the Cameroon Association of Towns ('ACVC') and the Cameroon Union of Towns and Councils ('UCVC'). The association provides members with information and capacity-building training, disseminates good practice, and also provides financial services.

6.2 Other associations of local government

The Public Body for International Cooperation ('OPCI') has also been set up to coordinate councils at divisional level and build links with local authorities overseas. Councils are permitted to seek decentralised cooperation ties with local governments abroad, especially in Europe.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The UCCC acts in an advisory capacity to the national government. In situations where approval for action is required from national government, senior divisional officers must acknowledge and respond to a council request within 15 days.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

There are a number of national government bodies which monitor the finances of local authorities. These include the National Regional and Local Authorities Control Squad of MINDDEVEL. The National Council for Decentralisation ('CND'), which is charged with the follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of decentralisation, and the Interministerial Committee on Local Services ('CISL') which is an interministerial organ for consultation, are placed under the authority of the minister in charge of decentralisation. The minister's mission is to ensure the preparation and the follow-up of transfers of competences and resources to regional and local authorities (councils) by the competent authorities. Legislation passed in 2003 provides for an Audit Bench ('CC') under the Supreme Court to enforce proper standards in the collection and use of council taxes and accounting procedures. Decree 2004/099 provides for an Audit

Office (Brigade de Contrôle des Collectivités Territoriales Décentralisées) to monitor the functioning of local and regional authorities.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

9.1 Local government expenditure

In 2015/16 local government expenditure was approximately 2.9% of total government expenditure;^{109a}; see table 10.2b. Anecdotal evidence indicates that most rural councils spend only on the most vital core functions, such as staff costs, road maintenance, pharmacy, healthcare and education. Larger urban councils are committed to a wider range of services.

9.2 Locally raised revenue

Local councils are empowered to levy taxes and charges including direct council taxes, cattle tax and licences, market trading licences, ground rents on shops and public transport licences. They can also charge a business levy, which is an annual licence payment calculated on a sliding scale according to the nature and size of an individual's economic activity, with a maximum assessment of XAF100,000 (US\$171).

9.3 Transfers

Local authorities receive block grant revenue from national government through MINDDEVEL via its Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (Fonds Spécial d'Équipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale or FEICOM)^{109b} based in Yaoundé with ten regional branches. These grants are weighted according to a council's population, surface area and other considerations. Top priorities for FEICOM's own resources include utilities and urban development. Funding is also available for the training of council staff. FEICOM also provides councils with non-financial support, including expert technical assistance, project evaluation, and other facilities. This is a vital role, given the lack of technical competence in many councils. FEICOM's key revenue role is the nationalised collection and redistribution of the Additional Council Tax levy (Centimes Additionnels Communaux or 'CAC'). CAC is a 10% levy on certain categories of national taxation specifically destined for council finance. Taxes that this levy is applied to include general income tax, business tax, entertainment tax, and value-added tax. CAC revenue is collected and allocated as follows: 10% to national government, 20% to FEICOM and 70% to councils. Of the total that goes to councils, 20% goes to Douala; 40% to Yaoundé and 36% to other councils. The remaining 4% is retained by FEICOM and used for a range of purposes, for example to compensate councils for revenue that is paid beyond their borders, to support infrastructure projects in border councils or to help councils affected by natural disaster. Forty per cent of forestry royalties are also redistributed to councils on a per capita basis. However, the fragmented nature of revenue appropriation and the widely varying circumstances of individual councils has led to considerable inequalities in resources.

Table 10.2a Income and expenditure for local government 2015/16

Income	2015/16 XAFbn	Expenditure	2015/16 XAFbn
Centre-local transfers		Administration	
Special Council Support Fund	10.0	Staff	na
Transferred to local authorities	38.1	Other administrative costs	na
Locally raised revenue		Services	
Council taxes	55.5	Roads	na
Licences and fees	na	Water	na
Other income	na	Other	na
TOTAL INCOME	123.6	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	-123.6

~ = approximate Source: MINATD communication with CLGF

Table 10.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2013–2017

	2015/16 est XAFbn	2016/17 est XAFbn	2017/18 budgeted XAFbn
Total government expenditure	4,249.8	na	na
Total local government expenditure	123.6	227.5	na
Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure	2.9%	na	na

Source: MINATD communication with CLGF, and budget statement 2016^{10.9a}

9.4 Loans

FEICOM also authorises loans for revenue and capital spending. FEICOM’s priorities, in line with other similar organisations in Africa, are capital projects of social value, including schools, utilities, healthcare and transport infrastructure. Loans are for a maximum of two years. The proportion of loan to grant depends on the type of project being funded.

9.5 Local authority staff

The secretary-general (head of the paid staff) and other administrative and technical officials of councils are appointed by MINDDEVEL, either from among the local staff of the councils or on secondment from relevant ministries, in consultation with national authorities. The training establishment for all local government officials is the Local Government Training Centre (‘CEFAM’), based in Buéa in the South-West Region. CEFAM is subordinate to MINATD and trains both current council personnel and new recruits, on two course cycles. There is so far no statutory instrument regulating the individual status and career structure of local government personnel. This often leads to a lack of local competence on the administrative side, even in large urban councils.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

Whilst councils and city councils have similar responsibilities and powers for service delivery, the sub-divisional councils have a modified set of powers. Council responsibility for service delivery often includes:

- utilities, including water, sewage and waste disposal
- town planning and urban development
- municipal roads and public transport
- births, marriages and deaths registration
- community health and safety
- social services
- primary education and literacy
- sport, culture and leisure.

In practice, smaller councils have difficulty fulfilling their statutory duties without a radical increase in their funding, although Law No. 2004/017 on decentralisation specifies that where services have been transferred, any relevant infrastructure and resources should also be transferred.

Chronic budgetary shortfalls and dilapidated infrastructure, however, create situations that are difficult for often poorly staffed local authorities to manage. Major capital expenditure is needed, but this problem has not been fully addressed in the decentralisation legislation so far passed.

10.2 ICT use in service delivery

No information is available.

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A UNDP- supported national plan for the contextualisation and prioritisation of the SDGs was approved in 2017 by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development. The plan identifies 152 SDG targets as being relevant to Cameroon.^{10.10a} Additionally, the Cameroon Civil Society Engagement Charter for the Sustainable Development Goals commits Cameroonians civil society to working with local governments, among other actors, on local efforts to achieve the SDGs.^{10.10b}

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 10.1a Government of Cameroon www.spm.gov.cm
- 10.1b Women in national parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
- 10.2a Constitution of Cameroon <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Cameroon.pdf>
- 10.2b Law 2004/017 22 July Loi d’orientation de la décentralisation www.cvuc-uccc.com/minat/textes/13.pdf
- 10.2c Improving Knowledge on National Urban Policy to Change Mindsets www.urbangateway.org/news/improving-knowledge-national-urban-policy-change-mindsets

- 10.3a Cameroon Census 2005 population by residence <http://cameroon.opendataforafrica.org/dqhimmc/residence>
- 10.3b National Institute of Statistics (NIS) www.statistics-cameroon.org. The last Census was in 2005; estimates are calculated by NIS using an estimated population growth.
- 10.3c Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development www.spm.gov.cm/site/?q=fr/content/elanga-obam-georges
- 10.4 Elections Cameroon: General report on the conduct of the twin legislative and municipal elections of 30 September 2013 www.elecam.cm/en/documentation/reports.html
- 10.5a Third Phase of the Community Development Programme Support Project <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/740631520503822784/Cadre-de-politique-de-deplacement-involontaire-et-de-reinstallation-du-Programme-National-de-Developpement-Participatif-PNDP>
- 10.6 United Councils and Cities of Cameroon www.cvuc-uccc.org
- 10.7 No references for this section
- 10.8 No references for this section
- 10.9a Calculated by CLGF from the figure provided in table 10.2a and the 2016 national budget statement. <http://minfi.gov.cm>
- 10.9b Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance www.feicom.cm
- 10.10a Sustainable Development Goals: Cameroon Validates Contextualisation Plan www.cameroon-tribune.cm/articles/12140/fr/sustainable-development-goals-cameroon-validates-contextualisation-plan
- 10.10b Institutionalised dialogue between the Government and Civil Society in Cameroon on the SDGs https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/133921nstitutionalized_dialogue_between_the_Government_and_Civil_Society_in_Cameroon_on_the_SDGs_in_Cameroon.pdf
- 10.11a UN 2012 statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
- 10.11b National Community Driven Development Programme www.pndp.gov.cm
- 10.11c UNDP HDR Cameroon country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CMR>



Annex 10a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Cameroon

Services	Delivering authority			Remarks
	National government	Councils	Sub-divisional councils	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION				
Police	■			
Fire protection	■			
Civil protection	■			
Criminal justice	■			
Civil status register		■	■	
Statistical office	■	■	■	
Electoral register	■		■	
EDUCATION				
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)	■			
Primary	■			
Secondary	■			
Vocational and technical	■			
Higher education	■			
Adult education	■			
SOCIAL WELFARE				
Family welfare services	■			
Welfare homes	■			
Social security	■			
PUBLIC HEALTH				
Primary care	■			
Hospitals	■			
Health protection	■			
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING				
Housing		■	■	
Town planning			■	
Regional planning				
TRANSPORT				
Roads	■			
Transport				
Urban roads				
Urban rail	■			
Ports	■			
Airports	■			
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION				
Water and sanitation	■	■	■	
Refuse collection and disposal	■	■	■	
Cemeteries and crematoria	■		■	
Slaughterhouses	■		■	
Environmental protection	■	■	■	
Consumer protection	■			
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS				
Theatre and concerts	■	■	■	
Museums and libraries	■	■	■	
Parks and open spaces		■	■	
Sports and leisure	■	■	■	
Religious facilities	■			
UTILITIES				
Gas services				
District heating				
Water supply			■	
Electricity	■			
ECONOMIC				
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	■	■	■	
Local economic development/promotion	■	■	■	
Trade and industry	■	■	■	
Tourism	■	■	■	

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service