

## TRADE IN THE WEST REGION

### Diagnostic report



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## INTRODUCTION

In her Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP), Cameroon envisages that the policy on development and diversification of trade must encourage sustainable growth and job creation. The trade sector is one of the main pillars on which the State relies on in order to revive her economy. The West Region has a very huge trade potential. Historically speaking, trade is considered in the West as a tradition that is transferred from one generation to the other. As a result, it has a large workforce at the regional level. To carry out an effective diagnosis of the trade sector in the West, it is important to define the legal and institutional framework. We will proceed with an analysis of the organisation of markets in the West, inter and intra-regional trade flows, policies or measures to promote the trade sector, and the supply of trade infrastructures. At the end of this diagnosis, we will propose a SWOT analysis.

## 1. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE TRADE SECTOR

### 1.1. Legal framework of the trade sector

Several laws and regulations govern the trade sector in Cameroon. These legal instruments are laws, decrees and orders. These include the following elements:

Laws governing the trade sector:

- 2015 Law governing commercial activity in Cameroon.
- April 18, 2016 Law governing external commerce in Cameroon.
- Law No. 2010/21 of 21 December 2010 regulating electronic commerce in Cameroon
- Framework law No 2011/12 of 06 May 2011 on consumer protection in Cameroon
- Law No. 2004/2 of 21 April 2004 regulating legal metrology in Cameroon
- Law No. 96/117 of 5 August 1996 on standardization
- Law No. 98/13 of 14 July 1998 on competition
- Law No. 2002/2004 of April 19, 2002 on the Investment Charter in Cameroon

Decrees governing the trade sector:

- Decree No. 2017/6523/PM of 07 June 2017 laying down the procedures for implementing Law No. 2016/4 of 18 April 2016 governing external commerce in Cameroon
- Decree No. 90/1475 of 09 November 1990 amending and supplementing some provisions of Decree No. 85/1405 of 10 October 1985 laying down the procedures for the inspection of measuring instruments
- Decree No. 92/5/PM of 06 January 1992 establishing the tax regime and the royalty rates applicable for the inspection of measuring instruments
- Decree No. 90/1476 of 09 November 1990 laying down the procedures for the approval of prices;
- Decree No. 2005/1928/PM of 3 July 2005 establishing the metrological characteristics of all ready packaged or similar products and the procedures for their control
- Decree No. 2008/820 of 29 April 2008 amending and supplementing some provisions of Decree No. 90/1476 of 09 November 1990 laying down the procedures for price approval;
- Decree No. 90/1483 of 9 November 1990 laying down the conditions and procedures for the operation of public houses;

- Decree No. 2011/1521/PM of 15 June 2011, providing the terms and conditions for the implementation of Law No. 2010/21 of 21 December 2010, governing electronic commerce in Cameroon;

## **1.2. Institutional framework of the trade sector**

At the institutional level, the trade sector at the regional level depends on the decentralized service of the Ministry of COMMERCE.

### **➤ Organisation of the Ministry of Commerce's decentralised services in the Region**

The decentralized services of the Ministry of Commerce in the West include the Regional Trade Delegation (supervises and coordinates activities under the Ministry at the regional level), Divisional Trade Delegations (supervises and coordinates activities under the Ministry at the Divisional level), Sub-divisional Control and Fraud Prevention Brigades (ensures the implementation of the legislation and regulations on trade, competition, prices, metrology, standards, quality, service provision and after-sales service).

### **➤ Main activities of the Ministry of Commerce's decentralized services in the West**

In the West Region, the Ministry of Commerce has two main functions:

- Ensure the promotion, distribution and monitoring of commercial activity in the Region:  
At the level of promotion, this entails;
  - monitor the progress of commercial activities by focusing on the production chain and the control of goods and services;
  - control the instruments that are part of commercial activity, namely weights, measures, standards, quality and prices;
  - promote trade (local and imported goods and services);
  - ensure that imported goods are put on the Cameroonian market at an affordable price which are generally below local prices.

In terms of distribution and monitoring, these means:

- ensure the supply of goods to the markets;
- ensure that goods circulate normally without any hindrances (artificial shortage). This is made possible by the upstream knowledge of all stake holders in the local producers' chain (importers, wholesalers and retailers);
- Ensure compliance with the texts and regulations governing the trade sector in the West Region.

## **2. THE SUPPLY OF TRADE INFRASTRUCTURES IN THE REGION.**

The West Region is made up of several commercial infrastructures that are spread throughout the Region. There are one or more permanent or periodic markets, in villages, districts or quarters.

**Table1** : Statistics on supermarkets, mini-markets, flea markets and fuelling stations in the West Region

Distribution network	Number
Supermarkets	07
Superstores	21
Flea markets	38
Fuelling stations	76

Source: Trade Statistical Yearbook, 2017

It can be observed from the above table that hypermarkets are totally absent in the West Region. The distribution networks of second-hand goods are important. The large trade surface areas for goods such as mini-markets and second-hand shops are represented in the divisional capitals. Fuelling stations have recorded a significant increase with the expansion of the oil sector, which witnessed the entry of companies such as TRADEX, BOCOM, PETROLEX, etc. Unfortunately, environmental standards are not always respected and we come across the development of fuelling stations near homes, and sometimes without a fire protection system with all the risks that this entails.

### 3. DISTRIBUTION OF MARKETS IN THE WEST REGION

In the West Region, there are three types of markets namely: periodic markets, permanent markets, and rotative markets.

#### 3.1. Periodic markets

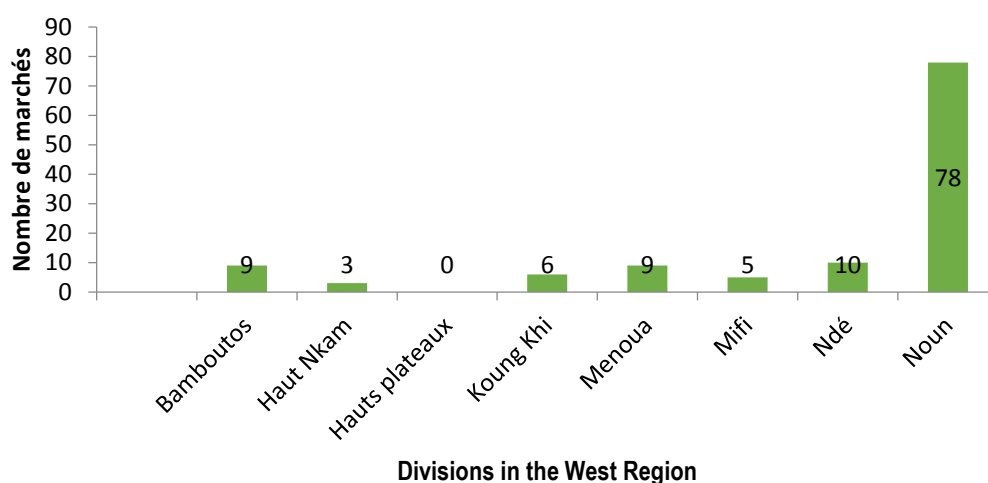
From its definition, it is a market that operates at a given time period, and according to the availability of goods to be exchanged. It could be weekly, monthly, or depending on the crops harvested (maize, groundnut, potatoes, coffee, etc.). Generally, these are markets in isolated areas.

Periodic markets can be traced back to the ancestral period. The latter used these markets as an area for cordial exchange. Thus, these markets operated only periodically. This system allowed the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages to meet each other and make friends. Moreover, in this type of market, traders are obliged to move regularly from one market to another. This has led to a network of hawkers who move from one market to the other in search of profit.

Periodic markets are mainly located in rural areas and are characterized by:

- Infrastructure built from temporary materials or in the open air;
- Items sold are mainly agricultural products.

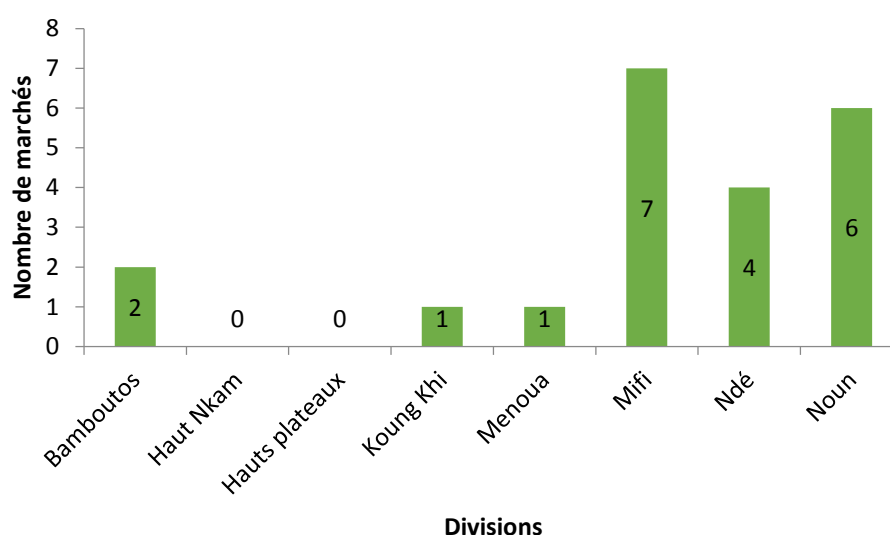
The figure below shows the distribution of periodic markets per division

**Figure 1 : West Region Periodic Markets**

It can be observed from the figure above that the Noun Division has the highest number of periodic markets in the West Region, accounting for up to 65% of the West Region's periodic markets. This can be explained by the fact that the Noun Division is one of the major agricultural basins in the West Region. These types of markets face several difficulties, the most important is the lack of trade infrastructure and the supervision of petit traders.

### 3.2. Permanent markets

A permanent market is defined as one which operates every day of the year. Generally, these are urban markets where demand and supply are constant. Permanent markets are generally found in the centres of Divisions and Sub-divisions. The figure below shows the permanent markets in the West Region.

**Figure 2 : West Region Permanent Markets**

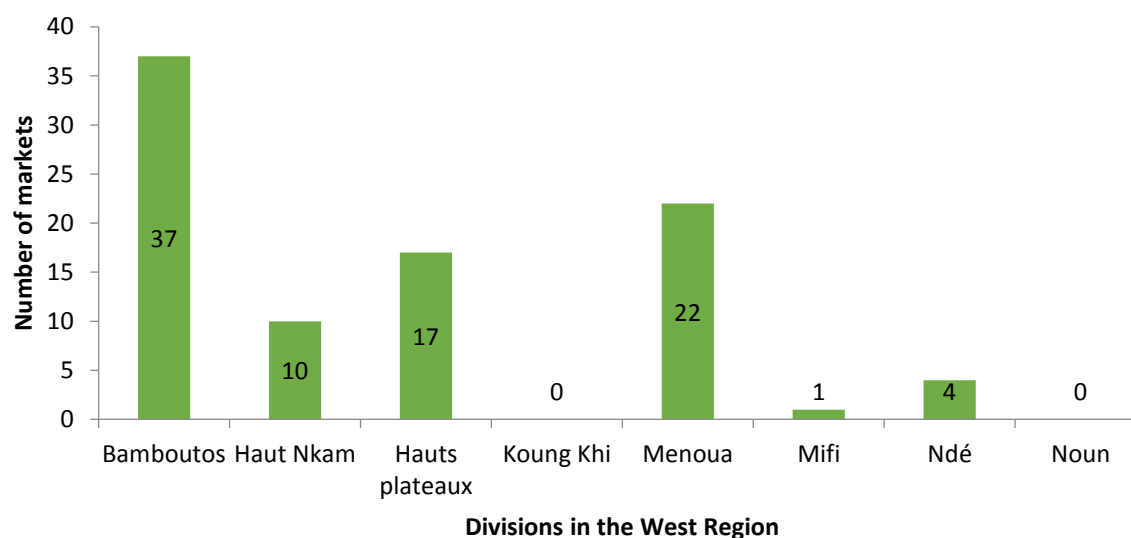
Mifi Division has the highest number of permanent markets in the West Region. Also, the largest permanent market in the West Region is the Bafoussam main market. The diversity of products it provides, its architecture and the revenues generated are huge. It is located in the centre of the town of Bafoussam, and welcomes people from other divisions of the West Region, and even from other Regions, on a daily

basis to buy various products: second-hand clothing, household appliances, hardware products, food and vegetables, traditional pharmaceutical products, etc.

### 3.3. Rotative market:

It is a weekly cyclical market, with a difference that it is held within eight days, that is. Seven days + 1 Day of the previous market day. These types of markets are the oldest forms of markets found. Also, in the Bamileké culture, a week has eight days. The market day is therefore highlighted in the traditional calendar. The figure below shows the rotative markets found in the West Region.

**Figure 3 : West Region Rotative Markets**



Bamboutos Division has the largest number of rotative markets in the West Region. Out of the eight divisions in the West Region, 6 have at least one rotative market. Divisions that do not have a rotative market are the Noun and Koung-khi.

### 3.4. Comparative analysis of the different types of markets per division

The table below is a summary of the West Region's periodic, permanent and rotative markets during the 2016 period.

**Table2** : Summary of periodic, permanent and rotative markets in the West

Divisions	Period			Total Number=(a)+(b)=(c)
	Number of Periodic markets(a)	Number of permanent markets(b)	Number of rotative markets (c)	Total
Bamboutos	9	2	37	48
Haut Nkam	3	0	10	13
HautsPlateaux	0	0	17	17
Koung-Khi	6	1	0	7
Menoua	9	1	22	32
Mifi	5	7	1	13
Ndé	10	4	4	18



Divisions	Period			Total Number=(a)+(b)=(c)
	Number of Periodic markets(a)	Number of permanent markets(b)	Number of rotative markets (c)	Total
Noun	78	6	0	84
<b>General Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>232</b>

Source: MINCOMMERCE 2017 STATISTICAL YEARBOOK

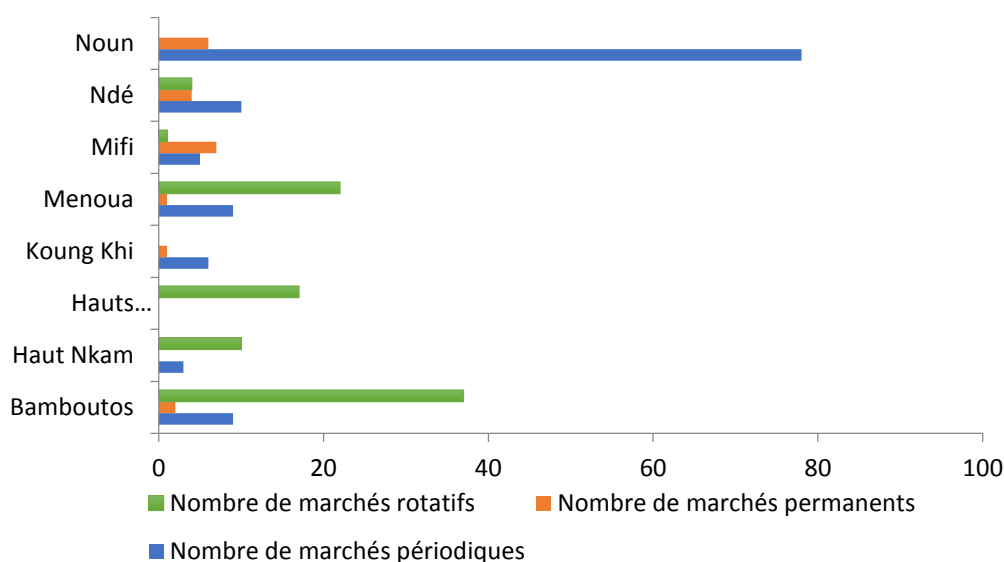
From the table above we notice that the West Region has a total of 232 markets, where 120 are periodic markets (52%), 21 are permanent markets (9%) and 91 are rotative markets (39%). These different markets face several difficulties.

The Divisions of Noun and Bamboutos have the largest number of markets (84 and 48 respectively), but paradoxically are the poorest divisions in terms of market infrastructure. The large number of markets in the Noun is due to its large size, which alone represents more than half of the West Region.

The Koung-Khi Division has the smallest number of markets (07). Its proximity to the Mifi Division (separated by a distance of 5 km) could be a factor which slows down market development in this Division. Indeed, land pressure is very high in Koung-Khi, and the State through the decentralized services of the Ministry of Commerce, and decentralized local authorities do not always obtain a land title for the construction of markets.

The figure below highlights a presentation of markets per division in the West Region.

**Figure 4 : Different markets in the West Region per Division**



Majority of markets in the West Region are either open-air or built with temporary materials. This situation is not very different from that of the national level. The table below shows the status of some markets in the West Region as compared to the national level.

**Table3-:** West Region Market Conditions and National Situation in 2016.

West Region Market Conditions	Regional Total	National total	Percentage
Open air	92	711	12.93
Built	47	446	10.53
Under construction	05	44	11.36
Temporary materials	81	348	23.27
Total	233	1549	15.04

Source: *Statistical Yearbook, 2017*

It is clear from this table that the state of market infrastructure in the West Region is similar to that at the national level. More than 80% of the markets are in the open air or built with temporary materials. There are few ongoing projects in the markets.

### 3.5. Specificity of markets in the West Region per Division

#### - Bamboutos Division

Mbouda market is renowned for its variety of food items such as pear, tomatoes, irish potatoes, etc. These products are purchased by direct sellers from the agricultural basins (Zindong and Babadjou main items are potatoes, agricultural plantations and Bamougong, Batcham and Bamenyam home gardens for pears).

Due to the poor road conditions that do not ease the delivery of products to their final targets which are consumers, these direct sellers store the goods to later on deliver them to retailers who are in charge of transporting them to the Mbouda market using local means of transport. Mbouda market is the final destination of all these retailers who deliver their goods to wholesalers, who usually own trucks for immediate transportation of the goods since they are perishable. With the construction of the avocado oil extraction company in Mbouda, it raises the issue of an imbalance between demand and supply if preventive measures are not taken to boost this agricultural activity.

Excluding these markets, there are very large trading areas on the Bafoussam-Mbouda axis, more precisely at the so-called plantain market (Bafounda), which distinguishes herself by the quantity of plantains produced and sold there. Many merchants from various destinations come and buy from there. The Toumaka-Babadjou market is also located on the Mbouda-Bamenda road, whose main item which is sold is raffia wine commonly known as "matango". The main permanent place where raffia wine is sold is found in Babadjou village (eponymous district). These are located along the main asphalt road where close to 75% of the workers in the sector converge daily and which is connected to many neighbourhood markets and collection points. These markets are the main supply centres. The most famous markets for this commercial activity are: The Ndoji market (Bamedji), Toumaka market (location of some travel agencies from which some major cities are supplied), the Kombou markets, Bachua and the Matazem toll gate, and the Djinso market because of its proximity to the Toumaka market.

In the Galim area, there are markets which are visited for the supply and/or availability in agro pastoral or manufactured products. These are periodic markets found in GALIM-Urban Centre, BAMENYAM, BAGAM, BATI, and BAMENDJING. Other periodic markets of great importance which could not be left

out are seen with the construction of market sheds in KIENEGHANG and MENFOUN markets. Unfortunately, storage infrastructures are very limited in these areas. For the entire GALIM sub-division, two (02) community storage stores were built in KIENEGHANG with the support of BINUM (an NGO based in Bafoussam), and in BAMENDJING with the support of the BAMENDJING Development Committee and CONGEH (Coalition of Cameroonian NGOs working in the field of human settlements). These warehouses are used to store goods.

**Photo 1 :** Picture of the food market in Mbouda where pear and sugar cane are found in large quantities



#### - Mifi Division

Due to its important position in the West Region, Mifi is a major export centre for eggs to other towns in Cameroon and out of the country (Yemen Chad, Sudan, and Equatorial Guinea). The multitude of feed mills in the Mifi makes the division a major centre for the supply of products from intensive and extensive poultry farming and live pigs, making the CASABLANCA market the largest poultry market in the West Region.

Also, Mifi is the distribution and marketing centre for household soaps. Mifi promote the sales of several types of soaps (Promo soap, SOC soap, etc.). The presence of soap factories such as SOC, SCS, CCO, account for the business climate that is found there. Apart from selling it on the national territory, these companies supply markets found in Chad and the RCA. Trucks that come to unload onions from the North are supplied with soap products heading for Chad and the RCA.

Mifi also distributes soft drinks, due to the presence of the Brasseries du Cameroun which produce soft drinks in the West Region. This industrial production allows it to supply the North-West and part of the Adamawa (as far as Tibati), passing through the Fouban-Magba-Bankim-Tibati road. The same goes

for the presence of the Société Camerounaise des Dépôts Pétroliers (SCDP) in the Mifi, which supplies oil and gas products to the localities of the North-West and Adamawa.

**Photo 2** : Picture of the B market of Bafoussam (Regional Hospital Junction)



#### - **Menoua Division**

The richness of its agricultural basins, especially in the localities of Bafou and Baleveng, gives this Division the opportunity to establish itself as a major producer of agricultural products. Pastoral Bafou Irish potatoes, Baleveng cabbage, Balessing carrots and green beans are sold throughout Cameroon and transported to countries such as Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, RCA, etc. An Irish potato agropole is located in the Nkong-Zem District and covers the entire Menoua area.

In the Santchou area, and despite the decrease in coffee costs, there is still an important coffee marketing centre that is sold to the Union Camerounaise du Café Arabica de l'Ouest (UCCAO), which is very popular on the world market. This area is also rich in food and market products. We could find yams, potatoes, pineapples, cassava and palm kernel oil which are sold in large quantities and transported to Melong to the Littoral. All these products are generally found along the Dschang-Santchou-Melong road.

In Baleveng, the sale of dogs scare away many traders from other parts of the region. Here, dogs are sold alive or dead, prepared and eaten by several people who love them.

In Dschang, the handicraft market is well developed, with the sale of handicrafts which are a specificity of the blind and visually impaired of the Catholic Sacred Heart Mission of the town of Dschang on the one hand, and craftsmen from elsewhere. These local products have also given an architecture to the main market of Dschang due to its straw roofs, which reflects the town's cultural identity from the colonial period till present day. Finally, a large border market with the South-West is located in Brenka in Menoua, which sells several products. These are not only agricultural products, but also manufactured products, aquatic products (fish, shrimps, etc.) caught from the Menouet River in the Fongo-Tongo District.



**Photo 3 : Picture of the Dschang handicraft market**

#### - **Noun Division**

Trade in the Noun Division is characterized by a huge potential for mixed markets (84) in which food, manufactured and livestock products are sold, a missing factor in the wholesalers network in the main market, a huge consumer potential, some built market infrastructures and equipment, a huge potential for the informal sector.

Markets, especially those in rural areas, are not built, which pushes people in the surrounding villages in the urban centre to go to the main market in Foumban, which has two market days a week (Wednesdays and Saturdays). The main problem in this sector is the lack of infrastructure and market equipment, and the absence of wholesalers in the Division.

Also, the Noun Division is known for her various marketable products. The Guayandi market in Koutaba is the largest livestock market in the West Region. Live animals are sold there to supply Cameroon's major cities. In the Foubot market, which is a periodic market, fruits and vegetables are found there in large quantities, as well as tomatoes, carrots, green beans and cabbage. These products are transported in large quantities to other national and international locations. In the Foumban Sultanate and beyond, an exhibition and sale of handicrafts is held. These products of great importance and local specificity are very popular among Foreigners who buy for far away distances. Finally, fish are sold in several forms (fresh and smoked) on the Noun local market, due to the richness of Mapé and Noun in fish (carps) and shrimp.

**Photo 4 :** *Picture/View of the Foubot Market with its abundant tomatoes*

#### - **Nde Division**

In this Division, the watermelon and tomato markets are flourishing. In addition to these products, seasonal plums are also sold to national and international countries (Gabon, RCA and Equatorial Guinea). Cocoa is also sold in the NDE Division, especially in the Bassamba, Bantoum and Tonga area, which are the main centres of cocoa marketing, and from which 3500 tonnes were legally produced in 2017. The same applies to Robusta coffee.

Along the Bangangté-Yaoundé axis, some markets thrive and are the pride of travellers and residents. The watermelon markets of Bangangté, Tonga and Bantoum, which sell watermelons, plantains, carrots, beans, etc. in large quantities to travellers who take it along them during their journey.

#### - **Division of HAUT - NKAM**

Trade is primarily carried out by women and takes place in the fairground markets held every eight days in the various villages of the Division (Baku, Banka, Bana, and Bandja etc.). In Banka, for example, there is a mini-mall with about fifteen shops owned by economic operators. It sells several products (manufactured, food and other). Development of informal trade, has led to difficulties encountered by the services of the Ministry of Commerce in collecting statistical information. Cash crops (Robusta coffee and cocoa) are traded in Haut-Nkam and remain the main source of income for men, while youths and women are interested in food and vegetable crops that are sold in and out of the Division.

In the KEKEM District, Robusta coffee, cocoa and palm oil, which are the main cash crops, are combined with other species such as cola, safoutier, mango and pear to be sold. Similarly, palm oil has an important place in KEKEM, which is an area suitable for elaiiculture. The quantities of palm oil are therefore important, and many wholesalers and retailers come to sell and transport palm oil to large cities where prices are being revised considering a factor or more. Finally, there exists many food crops. These

include maize, sweet potato, cocoyams, achu cocoyams, banana, plantain, yam, groundnut, voandzou and cassava, which are sold in the Division and throughout the West Region.

#### - **Division of HAUTS PLATEAUX**

The people of Hauts-Plateaux have trade links relations among themselves on one hand and on the other hand, with major cities such as Douala, Yaoundé and Bafang, with which the Division has the responsibility of being the producer/supplier of palm oil which is highly demanded. This Division is full of several weekly markets, including the Moumée market, which is opens every Friday, the Fomessa II market every Thursday and the Banwa Centre market, which is open every Saturday.

The weak organisation of farmers led to the entry into the marketing system of main cash crops (coffee and cocoa), a category of people qualified as coxieurs. The latter, according to their needs dictate their rules on farmers in this Division. Regarding other agricultural products and their outputs (plantains, yams, corn, garri, etc.), they are sold to "bayam selams" in the above-mentioned markets when the transport means by bush taxis are favourable. Indeed, the road network in the Division is bad, but has so far been very poorly maintained. This often makes access to certain production areas (Bameleck, Fombélé, Fomessa II) impossible. This obvious lack of a good road network and the limited number of vehicles circulating in the various villages in this area make the transport conditions for female vendors and their goods rather precarious. Given the perishable nature of this type of goods, huge losses are regularly encountered.

The supply of staple food is provided by traders coming from the other districts of the Haut-Nkam and Moundou divisions. It should also be noted, however, that very few local markets are built, which makes it difficult to sell the goods. Also, a warehouse was built at the Banwa main market but, strangely enough, the traders preferred to sell on the ground. Unfortunately, this phenomenon is encountered in several markets in the West Region of Cameroon. The municipal executive therefore hopes that a better fate will be reserved for the Moumée large market, a building which is estimated at CFAF 80,000,000.

At the village level, there are small, more or less equipped and crowded shops where you can buy basic necessities. The commercial activity there is dominated by soft drinks, especially "matango" and corn beer or "kan", locally produced alcoholic beverages that are part of the villagers' habits and highly sold.

#### - **Koung-Khi Division**

Due to its proximity to the Mifi Division, Koung-Nki is known as an excellent marketing and sales centre for agricultural and gardening products: Plantains, potatoes, cabbages, sweet potatoes, beans are purchased at the Djebem market by wholesalers, for distant destinations such as Douala and Yaoundé. Along the Bandjoun-Yaoundé axis, there are several markets on the road, such as the Tobe market, which has a reputation for providing roasted pork to travellers and which has a few shops permanently open, the former Bayangam tollbooth market, which consists of a few more or less equipped ware houses, and the Bandrefam market where products such as cabbage, yams, etc. are sold in large quantities.

### **3.6. Problem faced by markets in the West Region**

All markets in the West Region are characterized by their lack of organization and the uncontrolled occupation of space. In fact, markets are not organised by sector of activity, so much so that there are drinking spots alongside thrift shops, butcher shops alongside hardware stores, household appliances

alongside food and market gardening products, which makes it difficult to identify the areas where products are sold in a specific manner. Traders are also found in some areas that obstruct the entrances and exits of market and sometimes main roads. This is the case of Bafoussam's main market, the Fouban, Bafang and Mbouda market. This poor organization is at the root of the insecurity prevailing in these markets, which recently caused a fire in the Bafoussam main market, with a significant material loss.

Markets are not always organised according to the standards governing the code and statutes of trade in Cameroon. This is why we find a very large number of markets that are situated outdoor, and others made from temporary materials. This state of things does not allow traders to store goods, let alone be protected from the elements. The immediate consequence being the deterioration of goods, theft, liquidation of goods, etc.

### **3.7. Trade promotion actions in the West Region**

Another type of market that is carried out in the West Region is trade fair. It is an event where exchange and know-how of companies and creativity is exposed, which is very common in the Region, which attracts many economic operators in order to make their products known, and increase their turnover.

At these trade fairs, the promotion of products made in Cameroon and Cameroonians consuming these products is the ultimate ambition, even goods made in the West Region. Several products are sold there, ranging from organic products to manufactured products, generally at affordable prices. In the West Region, the largest trade fair is the one held in March at the Bafoussam sports complex of the Urban Community, under the leadership of the Governor of the Region. Other fairs are organized periodically in some Divisions according to local activities, under the supervision of the Regional Delegation of MINCOMMERCE West, and other sectors in charge of the activity. These include the Dschang and Mbouda fairs, the Mendumba fair in Bangangté, the Fouban craft and trade fairs, etc.

## **4. PRODUCT SALES FLOWS IN THE WEST REGION**

The West Region is a major centre for the exchange of goods from or to other regions of the country or internationally. It has large agricultural basins that supply both Cameroon and part of Central Africa. Also, the Region provides most of the poultry products from Cameroon and even from the sub-region. It should also be noted that several goods and services are also imported from other Regions or out of the region. The different flows that the West Region maintains with others or out of the region can thus be classified into two categories, namely incoming and outgoing flows.

### **4.1. Input flows**

There are many products entering the West Region. Which are inexhaustive, these are:

**Feed mill products:** The first among these products is corn. Local maize production as opposed to demand does not cover one fifth of it. As the staple food for feed and being one of the essential components of beer production, the West Region is obliged to import maize to meet the needs of their requests. The Société des provenderies du Cameroun (SPC) uses the Region's maize production alone/by herself, which explains the demand on maize in the Region. What follows/directly after maize is shells: these are raw materials used in the production of feed. Thanks to the availability of feed mills in the West Region (about fifteen), these shells are widely sold and come from the Ocean, Sanaga Maritime



and Mbam Divisions. The same applies for cotton cake, which is widely sold in the Region for the production of feed. These crabs come from North Cameroon.

**Soap products:** this is a process whereby palm oil is used to make soaps. The implantation of several soap factories (SOC, NOSA, SCS, etc.) in the Region has significantly increased the need for palm oil, despite the high rate of production in Kekem and the Santchou area. Also, it is a very common in the West Region for cooking. Achu, pounded potatoes, are just a few examples and therefore increase the demand for palm oil, alongside traditional rituals such as the dowry that requires palm oil which is a symbol in the West Region. Palm oil from the Littoral Region is included in the local production.

**Live animals:** These are the cows and other animals that come from Adamawa and are found on the local market to be sold, in order to increase local production which comes mainly from Koutaba and Konbou in the Babadjou District.

**Hardware and household appliance products:** they come from Douala following orders from large local factories (CIMENCAM, DANGOTE, FOKOU, QUIFEUROU, COGENI etc.), to be sold in the markets of the West region. Due to the pressure from housing and the implementation of development projects such as constructions projects (roads and buildings). In the West Region, these products are sold and contribute to the development of the local economy. For household appliances, they come from Nigeria through Eyumodjock-Mamfé-Bamenda-Bafoussam.

**Food and food products:** The North-West is a major food supply centre for the Region. These are items like apples, cabbage, carrots and green beans from Santa, tomatoes and green spices from Jakiri. Also oranges that come from Nigeria through the -Ekou - Eyumodjock - Mamfé - Bamenda - Bafoussam road section. Groundnuts enter the West Region from Garoua and Ngaoundéré. Also onions from the Far North and Chad. They either come by train (Yaoundé) or through the Ngaoundéré-Tibati-Magba-Foumban road section to be sold in the Region. In addition, products such as rice, soap, salt, flour, etc. are entering the local market.

**Textile products:** the West Region is a major centre for receiving and unloading second-hand clothing from the Douala port. Indeed, the major merchants, generally from the Batié sub-division, sell the goods found in the bales in the West Region, mainly in Bafoussam. Quality goods are sold on the local market in the West and the rest is shipped to the major cities like Yaoundé and Douala. Some goods are then washed to be exposed in the large shop shelves at high prices, in order to increase the profit margin of retailers.

**Oil, gas and forest products;** Forest and gas products enter the Region from the Littoral and some forest Products also come from the Centre. Oil and gas products are stored at the SCDP, from where they are transported to authorized service stations or marketing centres. For wood and coal coming from the centre, they are not in large quantities but contribute, alongside certain non-timber forest products, to the diversity of offer/supply of products from other regions, which are found on the West market.

## 4.2. Output flows

The West Region supplies the rest of the country, or even part of Central Africa, with mainly agricultural products. The following table shows the main products exported from the Region and their main destinations.

**Table4** : Types, origin and destinations of goods in the West Region.

origin of the goods	Types of goods	National destinations	International destinations
Foumbot	Foodstuffs from agricultural basins (tomatoes, spices, carrots, etc.)	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé,)	Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo, RCA
Mbouda	Foodstuffs from agricultural basins (pear, corn, beans, tomatoes, spices, carrots, etc.)	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé,)	Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo, RCA
Bafou	Foodstuffs from agricultural basins (cabbage, irish potatoes, corn, beans, spices, carrots, etc.)	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé,)	Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo, RCA
Bangangté	Foodstuffs from agricultural basins (Watermelons, green beans Tomatoes, spices, carrots, etc.)	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé,)	Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo, RCA
Bafoussam	Foodstuffs from agricultural basins (Plantain, Corn, beans, Tomatoes, spices, carrots, etc.)	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé,)	Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo, RCA
	Petroleum products	Whole of West Region North-West and Adamawa	/
	Brewery products	Whole of West Region, the North-West and part of Adamawa (till Tibati)	
	Farm products (eggs, feed, etc.)	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé, whole of the West Region)	Yemen, Chad, Sudan, and Equatorial Guinea
	Soap products	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé, whole of the West Region)	Chad, RCA, Gabon
Foumban	Craft objects	Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé,)	Nigeria, Gabon, Congo, RCA
Bafang	Robusta coffee and Cocoa		Belgium, Portugal, France
	Palm oil	Whole of West Region	

origin of the goods	Types of goods	National destinations	International destinations
		Major big cities in Cameroon (Douala, Yaoundé,)	

This table shows that the West Region exports several agricultural products out of the country. These exports go beyond the CEMAC sub-region and to the rest of the world. Although the exported products are mainly agricultural items, the Region supplies the rest of the country and several countries abroad with poultry and manufactured products (soap). These exports are an important source of foreign exchange and even improving the country's trade balance.

**Figure 5 : West Region trade Product Flow Map**



## 5. STAKEHOLDERS, DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING CHAINS FOR FOOD AND COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS IN THE WEST REGION.

### 5.1. Main stakeholders in the sales of food and commercial products in the Region

Several operators are involved in the sales of food and market gardening products in the West Region. These are producers, commercial intermediaries, traders and consumers. The role of the different operators in the marketing chain is defined as follows:

- Producers. They are the main operators in the marketing chain for fish and market gardening products. They are recruited among young people who have left school, former coffee farmers, retired people; in short, rural and neo-rural people;
- **Commercial intermediaries/middle-man monopoly of trade.** They are generally producers who do not own the agricultural plantations. Generally, they serve as a link between remote producers and other stakeholders in the sector. They buy food products that they transport with their vehicles and deliver them in bulk to buyers in periodic markets, traders or a regular customers in the city;
- Traders or "buyams sellams". They are generally women. Being strategic operators in the system, they are subdivided into two groups: (i) those who purchase large quantities of agricultural products in the production areas and deliver them to other traders in the city; (ii) retail traders (who personally sell the purchased products);
- The final consumers. From different and varied origins, they are made up of those who buy either for their own consumption or to attend various events for third parties.

## 5.2. Distribution and marketing chains

There are three types of distribution and marketing chains for products in the Region.

- Type 1: Producers/consumers. These chains are organized in several ways: either on local physical markets (interior districts or large markets) always hosting by a multitude of producers, or in plantations, when buyers, collectors or consumers, personally go to make purchases and collections. Transactions are made in cash or on credit. This is sometimes a risky procedure because the buyer may not pay his debt on the due date to the producer, or may not be around if he is a non-resident.
- Type 2: Producers/ /sales agents /consumers. In this chain, food items are transported to urban consumers through resellers who purchase and resell them to consumers.
- Type 3: Producers/sales agents/ consumers. This chain involves, a group of commercial intermediaries who own vehicles on the one hand, traders (wholesalers or retailers) and, on the other hand. These intermediaries who own vehicles do not generally own agricultural plantations. They are food product coxers or market gardeners.

For some time now, some producers have been organising themselves into street vendors. They travel along the arteries of the major markets in major cities such as Yaoundé and Douala with products (pears, tomatoes, pineapples, watermelons) inside their cars, to break the distribution chain that has been established. They are usually traders from Mbouda with pear, Bafou with irish potatoes, Bangangté with watermelons, Bansa with plantains, Foubot with tomatoes etc.

Globally, food and market gardening products are generally sold by people operating on a daily basis in various markets. These markets are organised around group of sellers/buyers (direct consumers or resellers), generally resellers and for some time now, around many commercial intermediaries (coxers) who have joined the chain. This situation is similar to that of non-timber forest products, where commercial intermediaries carry out more or less extensive processing.

**Figure 6 : New sales technique for west wholesalers to reduce distribution chains**

## 6. FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL TRADE PRACTICES IN THE WEST REGION

In the West Region, commercial fraud is perceived at two levels:

- Marketing or entry into the local market of products not approved by MINCOMMERCE: These are products such as diluted fuel "zoazoa" fuel that is sold in the West Region due to the proximity of Cameroon's border with Nigeria. They are also street drugs from Nigeria, which are sold in markets in the West Region. Finally, there are food products from Equatorial Guinea (milk, sardines, red wines and whisky, cigarettes, soft drinks and frozen chickens). All these products, which are prohibited by MINCOMMERCE on Cameroonian territory, are experiencing expansion difficulties, due to the establishment of the Fraud Control and Punishment Brigade by the Ministry of Commerce, which monitors the implementation of legislation and regulations on trade, competition, prices, metrology, standards, quality, service quality and after-sales service in the markets of the West Region on a daily basis.
- Traders' illegal practices: these are techniques used by unscrupulous traders to maximize profit at the detriment of consumers. These are wrong weight and measurement units in West Region markets, pump rigging in the case of hydrocarbons, the creation of shortages to create speculation and increase commodity prices.

Cases of fraud in the West Region are encountered when: failure to display prices, the unlawful increase in prices and practice/act of unlawful prices, the acquisition and sale of prohibited, expired and/or unsuitable products, the acquisition and sale of non-standard or smuggled products, the failure/absence of invoicing agents and/or purchase and/or sale invoices, the absence/lack of accounting/balance sheets documents, the absence and/or lack of documents (except accounting documents) related to commercial activities, the production, import or distribution of counterfeit products, illegal, misleading and aggressive commercial practices.

## 7. CONSUMER RIGHTS PROTECTION ASSOCIATIONS

Consumer rights protection associations monitor traders' abuses by reporting all kinds of misappropriation of price, quality, weight and measuring units that could harm the consumer. Working in close collaboration

with the West Region Trade Delegation, they monitor the standard in order to guarantee the consumer a product that guarantees quality and price.

At the national level, there are several associations found in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala, more precisely in the Consumer Protection Department, but which operate in the West Region on a transversal basis. We can quote some which are:

- The Association for the Development and Protection of Consumer Interests (ADEPIC);
- Citizen Consumer Association (CCA);
- The Association of Twelve Million Consumers (ADMC);
- The National Association of Consumers in Cameroon (ANCC);
- The Cameroonian Association of Human Rights of Consumers (ACDDHC);

In order to ensure greater efficiency, it is preferable to create at least one consumer rights association based in the West, to manage state subsidies for the development of consumer rights associations, to collaborate closely with MINCOMMERCE's decentralized services, and to organize consumer rights associations into chains for better management of the various sectors.

## 8. STRENGTHS - WEAKNESSES - OPPORTUNITIES - THREATS

Table 5 : SWOT Analysis

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>Weaknesses:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Diversity and availability of agricultural products, livestock, fishing and crafts;</i></li> <li>- <i>Presence of large markets for the supply of food and market products to major cities and other countries in the sub-Region;</i></li> <li>- <i>Inter connectivity with neighbouring Regions (Littoral, Centre, North-West, South-West, Adamawa) /very large trade centre for exchange of goods and people with other Regions ;</i></li> <li>- <i>Intensive and diversified business activities;</i></li> <li>- <i>Strong orientation of the populations towards trade (commercial activities is an aspect of culture in the Region);</i></li> <li>- <i>Existence of a network of street vendors;</i></li> <li>- <i>Effort to organise distribution: from the production industry to wholesalers and from wholesalers to retailers;</i></li> <li>- <i>Presence of some built markets;</i></li> <li>- <i>Presence of periodic, rotational and permanent markets in the Region ;</i></li> <li>- <i>Existence of several art galleries;</i></li> <li>- <i>Stability of agricultural commodity prices which results in abundance;</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong tendency to sell in the field that prevents transparency and overvalues production;</li> <li>- Poor management and organisation of commercial activity;</li> <li>- Lack of monitoring of commercial activity;</li> <li>- Preponderance of periodic markets;</li> <li>- Lack of a database of producers;</li> <li>- Insufficient infrastructure and adequate commercial equipment (built markets, ware houses, cold stores, supermarkets);</li> <li>- Anarchic installation of merchants;</li> <li>- Distribution and sale of prohibited products (contraband, expired products);</li> <li>- Non-specialization of markets;</li> <li>- Poor condition of some road sections that do not facilitate the transport of products to markets and consumers;</li> <li>- No trading pool;</li> <li>- Absence of similarity among the unit of measure/ Commercial fraud (weights, measures, etc.);</li> <li>- Informal trade developed, resulting in difficulties encountered by the services of the Ministry of Commerce in collecting statistical information;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>On-site processing of several agricultural products;</i></li> <li>- <i>High potential for mixed markets in which food, manufactured and livestock products are sold;</i></li> <li>- <i>Presence of potatoes agropole in Menoua and Bamboutos.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of collective action between the Town Halls and MINCOMMERCE for the management of markets;</li> <li>- Lack of a consumer rights association in the West.</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Possibility of developing an economic pole due to its strategic position (crossroads for the North-West, Littoral and Centre Regions);</i></li> <li>- <i>Project to build an avocado oil extraction plant in Mbouda;</i></li> <li>- <i>Project to build and open up the production basins of West Cameroon;</i></li> <li>- <i>Several contracts are being created (construction of a market in Fouban by the Mount Mbapit project).</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Absence of refrigerated warehouses and cold rooms for the preservation of perishable foodstuffs;</li> <li>- Theft of goods due to the lack of adequate frameworks for their security;</li> <li>- Proximity of national borders, which encourages smuggling</li> <li>- High consumption of imported products.</li> </ul>