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PEACE - WORK - HOME

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ECONOMIC OUTLOOKS

« *Enhancing Made in Cameroon
Through Handicrafts* »



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Abbreviations and acronyms

APME	Promotion Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises
BCPME	Cameroonian Banks of Small and Medium Enterprises
BPW	Buildings and public works
CFA	African Financial Community
CFCE	Business Creation Formalities Center
CIAY	Yaoundé International Handicraft Center
DAMSI	Directorate of Handicrafts and Migration of the Informal Sector
DEPP	Division of Studies, Projects and Prospective
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NSI	National Institute of Statistics
ME/IM	Medium Enterprise / Medium Industry
MINPMEESA	Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts
NMAC	Nomenclature of Handicrafts Trades of Cameroon
SSO	Social Economy Organization
PE	Small business
GDP	Gross domestic product
SME	Small and medium enterprises
PMEESA	Small and Medium Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts
SCA	Accelerated Growth Strategy
SIARC	Cameroon International Handicrafts Fair
SND-30	National Development Strategy 2020-2030
TPE	Very Small Business
GO	Added Value
VAR	Regional Handicrafts Village
GO	Special Handicrafts Village

Introduction

Since 2019, the world has been grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic and Cameroon has not been spared. One of the difficulties revealed is that of the supply system for raw materials and finished products. Indeed, the border closures have led to restrictions on international transactions on goods and services and Cameroon has understood the need and urgency to increase its local production to meet local demand, substitute import goods which weigh down its trade balance and acquire shares in the international market.

This concern is at the heart of current debates and is aimed at all sectors of the economy, in particular that of crafts. Indeed, aware of the dynamism and expansion of the informal sector, MINPMEESA has put in place policies and mechanisms to promote local handicrafts in order to make them a means of import substitution.

This is what some countries have managed to do, which have distinguished themselves in the field of Handicrafts by setting up a profession that enhances their cultural heritage. In Senegal, for example, sewing exhibited as the “Senegalese label” is a craft that contributes enormously to the development of the country. This sector brings significant currencies into the country and is one of the five clusters of the Accelerated Growth Strategy (SCA) on which Senegal intends to be an emerging economy by 2035. This handicrafts is positioned at the end of the Cotton sector encompassing the various trades namely: cotton farmers, weavers, dyers and tailors. Senegal also exports its culinary art around the world.

Cameroon abounds in enormous natural resources necessary for the promotion of handicrafts. However, its contribution to economic development remains low (approximately 5% of GDP) and nearly 80% of handicrafts players work in the informal sector. Getting young people interested in crafts, developing it for the benefit of economic growth and promoting Cameroon's image on a regional and global scale remain challenges for which MINPMEESA is challenged. The analysis of handicrafts in Cameroon requires looking into the modernization of work equipment, the implementation of new products, the improvement of quality and standards on handicraft productions.

This study aims initially to identify craft trades with growth potential and to formulate proposals in order to set up specific policies aimed at enabling craftsmen to better structure themselves in favor of the import substitution mix and the promotion of exports.

Chapter 1: STRUCTURING OF THE CRAFTS SECTOR IN CAMEROON

This chapter discusses the structuring of the handicrafts sector, its legal environment, the related promotion policies and its mapping.

1.1. Legal environment

In various forms, craftsmanship is present in every region of the world. It engraves a personal identity relative to a geography and a historical temporality. Through its objects, crafts relate the history of countries, their economy, their lifestyle as well as the way of interpreting their environment. In Cameroon, this sector has been undergoing various changes for some time; it poses artistic, economic and social problems.

Handicrafts present a diversified set of products: carpets, pottery, ceramics, jewellery, copper, ironwork... intended for everyday consumption, but also for the tourist market.

It is with this potential that the sector abounds that the Ministry in charge of Small and Medium Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts was created in 2011; this thanks to the Presidential Decree of December 2004 No. 2004/320 on the organization of the Government, amended by Decree No. 2011/408 of December 9, 2011 and supplemented by that of May 27, 2013, No. 2013/169. This ministerial department has in its organic structure, three technical directorates, one of which is dedicated to crafts and migration from the informal sector. The Directorate of Handicrafts and Migration of the Informal Sector has the following main missions:

- ❖ the development and implementation of the handicrafts development policy;
- ❖ the identification and promotion of the handicrafts sectors;
- ❖ the creation of handicrafts businesses;
- ❖ supervising handicrafts businesses, monitoring the application of standards and improving the quality of craft products;
- ❖ the development and implementation of a strategy to promote handicraft products, in liaison with the administrations concerned;
- ❖ the implementation of capacity building mechanisms for artisans;
- ❖ the search for outlets for handicrafts;
- ❖ the definition and improvement of the status of the craftsman;
- ❖ the promotion of professional groups and trades;
- ❖ research and development of support mechanisms for craftsmen, in liaison with the administrations concerned;
- ❖ control of the execution of programs and projects in favor of craftsmen;
- ❖ exploitation of the results of studies and surveys on the informal sector;
- ❖ exploitation of the results of studies on the possibilities of migration from the informal sector;
- ❖ the development and implementation of a national policy on migration from the informal sector to the formal economy;

- ❖ the consistency, in liaison with the partners and administrations concerned, of the programs in favor of the migration of informal activities.

In addition, in 2007, Law No. 2007/004 of July 3, 2007 was promulgated governing crafts in Cameroon. This defines crafts as all activities of extraction, production, transformation, maintenance, repair, essentially manual services and exercised as a main activity. Craftsmanship is subdivided into 03 sectors, namely:

- ❖ handicrafts;
- ❖ crafts production;
- ❖ craftsmanship.

The said law presents the craftsman as being any self-employed person who carries out an activity and who assumes full responsibility for its direction and management, while participating himself in the work.

1.2. Structuring of crafts in Cameroon

1.2.1. Analysis of the Handicrafts Production Units by region

Since 2011, craftsmen have been required to register in the 360 municipalities of the national territory. Indeed, these have been equipped with municipal registers and human resources to build a reliable database on craftsmen.

Between 2016 and 2021, there are thus nearly 66,000 58,340 Cameroonians who left as follows:

Table 1: Evolution of UPAs registered in the Communal Offices

REGION	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ADAMAWA	334	2,102	2,137	2,202	112	553
CENTER	231	2,793	1,290	1,443	256	888
EAST	496	1,233	1,640	504	2,751	297
FAR – NORTH	351	1139	313	665	665	1,566
LITTORAL	1,022	3,500	1,831	2,324	2,432	1,416
NORTH	420	507	536	521	394	422
NORTH WEST	366	80	56	26	44	114
WEST	1,964	846	2,101	1,200	296	385
SOUTH	1,901	1,944	1,890	2,449	340	326
SOUTH WEST	1,788	246	20	215	192	165
TOTAL	6,973	14,390	11,814	11,549	7,482	6,132

Source : Communal Registration Offices 2016-2021

In 2021, the Far North and the Littoral concentrate nearly half of the craftsmen registered this year. We also note a decrease in the number of craftsmen registered over the period 2017-2021.

1.2.2. Analysis of the Handicrafts Production Units by gender

In 2021, the Far North and the Littoral concentrate nearly half of the craftsmen registered this year. We also note a decrease in the number of craftsmen registered over the period 2017-2021.

Table 2: Evolution of UPAs registered in the Communal Offices according to gender

SEX	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%
MAN	4,710	67.5	8,941	62.1	7,671	64.9	7,587	65.7	4,393	58.7	3159	51.52
WOMAN	2,263	32.5	5,449	37.9	4,143	35.1	3,962	34.3	3,089	41.3	2973	48.48
TOTAL	6,973	100	14,390	100	11,814	100	11,549	100	7,482	100	6132	100

Source : Communal Registration Offices 2016-2021

Just as female entrepreneurship is encouraged with regard to the creation of SMEs, we also note with regard to crafts that women are increasingly registered in municipal offices.

1.2.3. Analysis of the Handicrafts Production Units according to the type of crafts

Table 3: Evolution of UPAs registered in the Communal Offices according to the type of crafts

CRAFTS TYPE	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%	Effective	%
ART	1,781	25.5	8,280	57.5	5,735	48.6	5,370	46.5	2,987	39.9	1956	31.89
PRODUCTION	3,034	43.5	3,884	27	2,992	25.3	2,922	25.3	2,420	32.3	2611	42.57
SERVICE	2,158	30.9	2,226	15.5	3,087	26.1	3,257	28.2	2,075	27.7	1565	25.52
TOTAL	6,973	100	14,390	100	11,814	100	11,549	100	7,482	100	6132	100

Source : Communal Registration Offices 2016-2021

From 2017 to 2020, craftsmanship dominated the recordings. In 2021, production crafts represent 42.57% of registrations to the detriment of artistic crafts (31.89%).

Table 4: Evolution of UPAs according to the type of craft by region

REGIONS	Type of craft	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ADAMAWA	Art	96	604	1,282	947	44	163
	Production	117	736	550	678	55	67
	Service	121	762	305	577	13	323
	Total	334	2,102	2,137	2,202	112	553
CENTER	Art	163	1,971	557	954	30	290
	Production	36	435	589	295	60	290
	Service	32	387	144	194	166	308
	Total	231	2,793	1,290	1,443	256	888
EAST	Art	175	435	579	178	1,259	88
	Production	257	639	849	261	805	114
	Service	64	159	212	65	687	95
	Total	496	1,233	1,640	504	2,751	297
EXTREME –NORTH	Art	65	211	135	148	142	458
	Production	161	522	143	306	340	773
	Service	125	406	35	211	177	335
	Total	351	1,139	313	665	665	1566
REGIONS	Type of craft	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
LITTORAL	Art	168	575	582	556	1,094	485
	Production	525	1,798	859	1,122	608	735
	Service	329	1,127	390	646	730	196
	Total	1,022	3,500	1,831	2,324	2,432	1416
WEST	Art	16	212	908	383	152	205
	Production	31	409	960	566	111	143
	Service	17	225	233	251	33	37
	Total	64	846	2,101	1,200	296	385
NORTH	Art	170	291	232	220	94	64
	Production	163	136	245	196	169	269
	Service	87	80	59	105	131	89
	Total	420	507	536	521	394	422
NORTH WEST	Art	171	37	24	12	7	43
	Production	43	10	26	3	37	71
	Service	152	33	6	11	0	0

	Total	366	80	56	26	44	114
SOUTH	Art	720	736	817	960	61	113
	Production	519	531	863	885	164	102
	Service	662	677	210	604	115	111
	Total	1,901	1,944	1,890	2,449	340	326
SOUTH WEST	Art	409	56	9	46	104	47
	Production	1,022	141	9	131	65	47
	Service	357	49	2	38	23	71
	Total	1,788	246	20	215	192	165

Source : Communal Registration Offices 2016-2021

The Far North region encompasses more artisanal production units in Cameroon and 2021. More than one in four artisans (25.53%) in Cameroon reside in this region in 2021.

1.3. Public policies for the promotion of crafts

With regard to the promotion of "Made in Cameroon" products, Decree No. 2011/0003/PM of January 13, 2011 laying down the procedures for exercising certain powers transferred by the State to the Communes in the promotion of artisanal production of communal interest, stipulates that there is:

- the organization of crafts at the local level in order to allow craftsmen and craft businesses to make their productions known and sell more easily at the local level;
- support for artisans and craft businesses at the local level, which can be technical, material and logistical.

After the local level, there is the regional level with the organization of regional craft fairs by the departmental delegations of MINPMEESA. This opportunity gives craftsmen and craft businesses a larger audience and entitles them to participate in the regional competition for the best craftsmen.

At the national level, the MINPMEESA organizes the International Handicrafts Fair every two years. The 2020 edition, organized in 2021, saw the participation of around 700 exhibitors and more than 10,000 visitors.

1.4. Information Gathering Methodology

While contributing to economic development initiatives, the spinoffs of crafts can be significant in terms of job and wealth creation. The implementation of policies aimed at performing the sector requires a good mastery of it. To this end, we interviewed the players in the crafts sector by giving them the interview guide in the appendix, in order to determine the trades with high potential.

We then collected information from craftsmen in the wood, leather and rattan trades, present at SIARC 2021. The interview guide (see Appendix) was administered to 45 craftsmen with a

satisfactory response rate. by 99%. The purpose of this guide was to collect the perceptions of the actors of the trades selected on their ability to contribute to the "made in Cameroon" label and to identify the value chains linked to these trades. Thus, in addition to identification, it made it possible to collect data on the supply of raw materials, the consolidation of know-how, competitiveness, etc.

Chapter 2: PRODUCTION AND VALORIZATION OF THE “Made In Cameroon” LABEL

This Chapter presents the results of the survey carried out among 45 artisans during the SIARC 2021 edition for the wood, leather and rattan trades.

Box 1: Annual Business Survey

The results on the wood trade were supplemented by those of the report of the Annual Survey of Companies produced by the INS in 2019. Indeed, the study was carried out among others on a sample of 23 VSEs and 24 SMEs of the furniture manufacturing branch as well as with craftsmen in the wood industry in the cities of Douala and Yaoundé. In Yaoundé, three sites have been chosen for this purpose. These are sites located in the Olezoa districts; Elig-edzoa and Melen. While in Douala, these are mainly sites present in Bepanda, Bonaberi and Camp Yabassi.

Table 5 : Evolution of the turnover of the Wood, Leather and Rattan businesses between 2018-2020

Tradesmen	Turnover (FCFA)		
	2018	2019	2020
WOOD	51,988,000	32,590,000	61,330,000
LEATHER	11,600,000	9,700,000	15,000,000
RATTAN	1,600,000	15,300,000	10,900,000
TOTAL	65,188,000	57,590,000	87,230,000

Source : SIARC 2021 survey

Data from the Cameroon International Handicrafts Fair organized in 2021 shows that wood compared to leather and rattan is one of the raw materials that captures the largest share of investments in the field of handicrafts. The level of turnover is estimated at 61,330,000 FCFA (see Table 2). This observation is all the more relevant as it reveals that wood is the main raw material in the category (wood, leather and rattan) for the years 2018 and 2020.

2.1. The leather handicrafts

With a market of more than 50 billion US dollars per year, the production and marketing of leather and its derivatives remains an important pool of wealth in Cameroon. The processing of animal skins is a veritable production chain. It begins with slaughter and ends with the marketing of finished products, passing through processing using tannery techniques. Hence the presentation of this sector as an inexhaustible source of jobs. Collectors, tanners, dressmakers, stylists and other craftsmen never twiddle their thumbs. Many subsectors can thus be freed from the exploitation of animal skin.

The Cameroonian leather industry is an important component of the consumer goods sector, it plays a major role in the national economy through its participation in job creation and the improvement of the trade balance. The main production areas are the Far North and the North.

The sector remains at the heart of the concerns of MINPMEESA and this is perceptible through the presence of leather articles in the Handicrafts Villages. But the sector suffers from several problems, in particular the resurgence of competition from Asian countries, notably India, China and Vietnam. According to the Nomenclature of Handicraft Trades in Cameroon ¹, the sector includes the following sectors:

- ❖ Bootmaker;
- ❖ shiner / cobbler / shoe arranger;
- ❖ cobbler ;
- ❖ furrier ;
- ❖ leatherworker ;
- ❖ saddler hammerhead ;
- ❖ tanner ;
- ❖ upholsterer ;

The production of leather is dependent on the breeding of small and large cattle whose skin is thus transformed. In this sense, the Far North region of our country therefore appears to be the place conducive to the development of this industry.

The raw materials used in the production of leather are mainly animal skins (sheep, varan, goat, beef) and these are mostly purchased from slaughterhouses at affordable prices. There are also skin resellers in some markets and for some time the raw skin has been exported to Nigeria, which has an impact on the cost of the product.

Most artisans who work with leather claim to have a natural predisposition but continue to train through workshops offered by the Ministerial Department to continue to optimize the skill. Thus, with leather, they produce, among other things, shoes, bags, jackets, carpets, sofas and poufs.

Aware of the issues surrounding the leather market, the Cameroonian Government has set up the leather and skins processing center in Maroua. A technical center essentially dedicated to the development of the leather industry in the region. Consisting of an administrative building, stores, hangars, it is a center set up with the collaboration of the Federation of Tannery and Leather Artists.

In addition, although a quarter of artisans sell their items to merchants, more than 35% of them also sell to individual buyers (local and foreign) and this through advertisements on social networks. It should be added that craft villages and fairs are real showcases for products.

Regarding the competitiveness of the finished products, some of them are certified and their originality and durability are assets. In addition, the prices are very competitive but the

¹ Nomenclature validated by the National Statistics Council organized in November 2021

dilapidated state of the equipment used does not give a fine rendering (many customers complain about the quality of the finishes). But these remain very popular with customers.

With the technical support of the polytechnic school of Maroua, the leather processing center of the city of the same name will become in the next few years the technopole of the animal skin industry in the sub-region. It would still be necessary to master the main input of this activity: the breeding of animals. It is essential that upstream measures be taken to develop industrial farming in northern Cameroon.

2.2. The wood handicraft

The reform of the forest-wood sector launched in Cameroon in the 1990s aimed to implement sustainable forest management and develop an efficient industrial sector. To do this, the Cameroonian Government has supported the wood processing sector by deciding to equip the Cameroonian administration, at least 40% with locally manufactured furniture. It is a question of boosting the wood sector which represents the second export activity in Cameroon behind oil exploitation. It brings in 13.3% of the country's revenue. This forestry industry, which generates nearly 30,000 direct jobs and 150,000 indirect jobs, only contributes about 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Alongside the large wood processing factories, there are craftsmen who produce furniture, sculptures and jewelry, kitchen utensils.

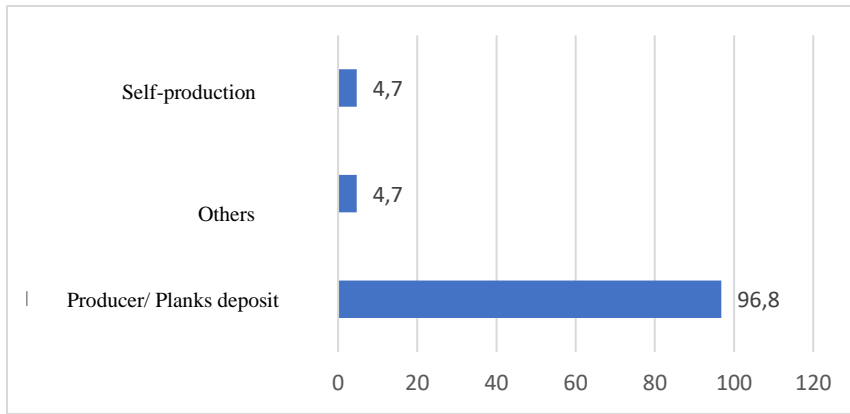
The wood sector is a macro-sector, which globally refers to the entire chain of actors who grow, cut, transport, transform, market and recycle or destroy the wood for the end user or at the end of the object's life and very often at the end of this life, we find the craftsmen.

Indeed, the craftsman buys raw products which he transforms into finished or semi-finished products. It uses human resources made up of small teams. It is mainly focused on the local market. The mode of operation is self-employment or family employment, without any real internal organization. Working capital is difficult to obtain. Not having access to raw materials from validly controlled concessions, its products are essentially illegal.

Craftsmen of wood and related materials apply traditional techniques such as drying and impregnation to prepare wood, straw, rattan, reeds, stone, clay, shells and other materials, and carve, mold, assemble, weave or paint and decorate several articles for personal or household use or for decoration. Basket weavers, brush makers and related workers select and prepare materials such as hair, nylon, fibre, brush, metal barb and wire to make rattan furniture, brushes and brooms, and to weave several types of basket.

More than half of the craftsmen serviced during SIARC 2021 say they source their wood from sawmills (depots for boards). This result is close to that published by the INS in the *annual business survey report (2019)* which states that 96.8% of furniture manufacturing companies source their supplies from board producers/depots.

Figure 1: Proportion of furniture manufacturing companies by raw material supply channel (in %)



Source : INS, EAE 2019

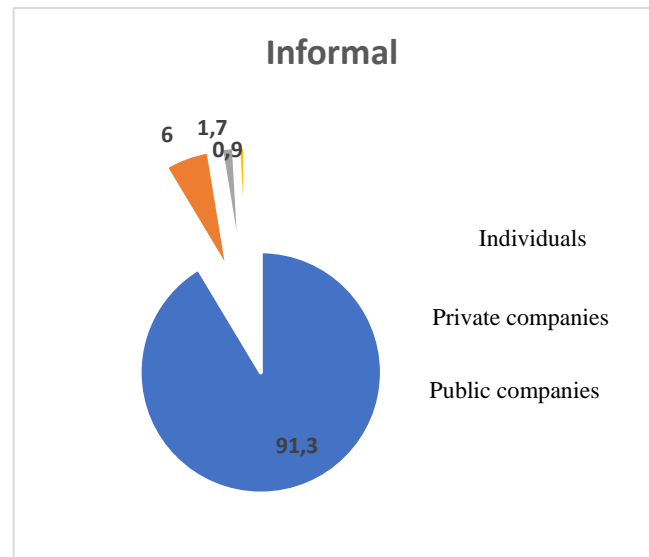
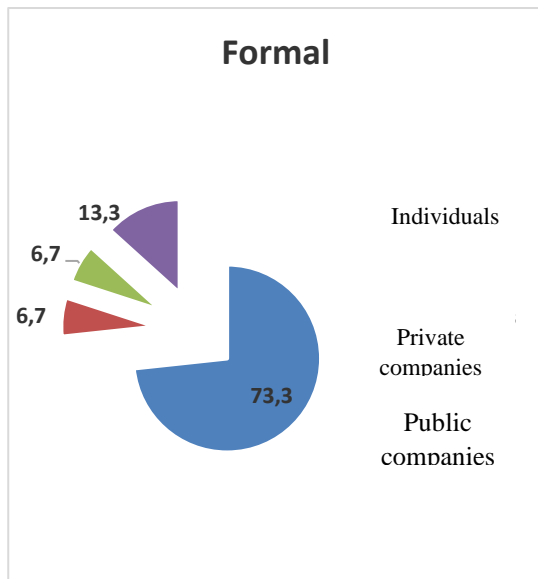
The difficulty of supply is among other things the scarcity of certain species of wood, the fact that certain species of wood are protected and the fact that others are cut into logs and it is the rest of the trunk that is exploited by sawmills, poor road conditions and customs barriers.

In addition, learning the trade was mostly done by observing a parent and the activity is a resumption of business.

As for the products produced, they are sold in local markets, fairs and craft villages to individuals. They have a huge success with customers but the massive importation of furniture from countries like China is unfair competition in the sector. In addition, the craftsmen's manufacturing equipment does not favor production on a scale in order to satisfy a demand greater than that of the production area.

In general, the study of *the Annual Business Survey (2019)* reveals that companies sell their furniture mainly to individuals, i.e. 89.3% of units. This result is more pronounced within informal production units (IPU) where 91.3% of companies have private individuals as their main customer.

Figure 2: Breakdown of furniture manufacturing companies according to main clientele and formality criterion



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2.3. The rattan handicrafts

It is a trade that consists of making furniture and decorative objects from lianas, fibers and even bamboo and wood. The main raw material, which is the rattan liana, is provided by the villagers who own marshy fields and some get their supplies from the forests. The difficulties of access to this raw material are due to the quality of the road infrastructures (the villages are difficult to access) and to the physical hardship in harvesting the vines.

As with the trades mentioned above, rattan craftsmen acquire their experience as a family and are faced with the problem of a lack of suitable equipment. 80% of the rattan work would be done by hand, which makes production cumbersome. The main customers are national or foreign individuals and some of them are decorators or traditional leaders.

Although some artisans believe that local consumers prefer imported furniture or decorations because of the very competitive price of these on the market, they are nevertheless satisfied with the quality of production, which is improving.

2.4. Sales Channels

Sales channels are difficult to control in the craft sector because of the poor organization of the players in this sector. In addition, the products are sold on customer order because the craftsmen

have not yet developed effective advertising strategies. It is to solve this problem that the State has created infrastructures for the supervision, training and marketing of handicraft products. Indeed, since January 7, 2013, the craft villages exist and are functional in the different regions of the country, and the State organizes every 2 years the International Crafts Fair in Cameroon and in order to bring young people to invest more in this sector of activity.

Given the development of information and communication technologies, the sales channels for handicrafts have evolved, they have gone from the traditional gallery to the modern gallery or virtual art gallery to allow craftsmen to offer their products on a larger scale and gain visibility.

The foreign trade data from the national accounts of the INS bring to our knowledge that for the handicrafts targeted within the framework of this study constitute an important part of both Cameroon's exports and imports.

With a view to converging towards government objectives, namely to densify the industrial fabric (VAM 25% in 2030) and to increase the share of the manufacturing sector in GDP (36.8% in 2030) and increase the share of exports of manufactured products to 54% in 2030, It would be an advantage to pay particular attention to entrepreneurship through the fruits that craftsmanship brings to the dynamics of industrialization.

Although the volume of sawn timber imports in Cameroon fell by 18% in 2020 to 783,500 m³, accentuated by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, they still remain significant. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INS), log timber provided Cameroon with 4% of its export earnings during the first half of 2021. This product thus ranks in the top six of the main sources of revenue for countries during the period under review, far behind crude petroleum oils (39%); raw cocoa beans (13%); liquefied natural gas (9%); sawn wood (7%) and raw cotton (7%).

Table 6 : Imports of Wood, Leather and Rattan in Cameroon over the period 2015 - 2020

Period	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	V	%	V	%	V	%	V	%	V	%	V	%
Skins and leathers	75	0.002	70	0.002	83	0.003	207	0.006	145	0.004	131	0.004

Leather goods, travel goods etc.	6,275	0.176	5,343	0.173	5,556	0.182	5,676	0.167	5,071	0.131	3841	0.121
Wood and articles of wood	3,028	0.085	1,821	0.059	2,713	0.089	2,435	0.072	3,448	0.089	2629	0.083
Cork and articles of cork	53	0.001	36	0.001	59	0.002	31	0.001	19	0	39	0.001
Basketwork and esparto	258	0.007	187	0.006	131	0.004	190	0.006	208	0.005	209	0.007
Total imports of wood products, leather , rattan	9689	0.271	7457	0.241	8542	0.28	8539	0.252	8891	0.229	6849	0.216
Total Imports	3,575,147	100	3,087,355	100	3,054,277	100	3,405,170	100	3,856,890	100	3,178,391	100

Source: DGD/MINGI

V: Value (in billions of FCFA) %: Percentage of total exports

In view of the foreign trade statistics presented by the General Directorate of Customs, it can be seen that the weight of imports of leather, wood and rattan products are not significant enough in the total imports into Cameroon (about 0.22%). Although they experience an average decline over the period 2015-2020, they are the most significant for products such as “leather articles, travel articles” and “wood and cork articles”.

Furthermore, the export table shows that only wood products constitute 28% of Cameroon's total exports. Although this constitutes a fairly significant influx of foreign currency on the national territory, it should be remembered that the most representative products are more the constituent elements of the raw material from wood necessary for processing.

In this regard, there is a scarcity of the raw material necessary for the artisanal practice capable of carrying the country towards the structural transformation of its economy.

This illustration shows the need to take effective measures to reduce exports of raw wood and wood logs in favor of products from wood processing. For craftsmen in the sector, to acquire the skills necessary for the transformation of wood to offer quality products respecting national, sub-regional and international standards to promote the competitiveness of the Cameroonian economy.

Table 7 : Exports of Wood, Leather and Rattan in Cameroon over the period 2015-2020

Periods	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	V	%	V	%	V	%	V	%	V	%	V	%
Wood and articles of wood	291,587	12.15	284,869	14.54	293 209	15.58	307,036	14.54	279,935	11.7	253,736	14.07
Raw wood (logs)	103,530	4.31	90 172	4.6	113,789	6.05	121 210	5.74	85,790	3.59	74,945	4.16

Sawn timber	164,578	6.86	169,732	8.66	151,733	8.06	157,804	7.47	167,593	7	158,388	8.78
Wood veneer sheets	18,963	0.79	21,403	1.09	21,841	1.16	24,071	1.14	23,525	0.98	18,643	1.03
Plywood, veneer and similar laminated wood	2,043	0.09	1,647	0.08	1,319	0.07	1,666	0.08	1,827	0.08	894	0.05
Total exports of wood products, leather, rattan	580 701	24.19	567,823	28.98	581 891	30.92	611 787	28.97	558670	23.35	506606	28.09
<i>Total exports</i>	2,400,217	100	1 959 76	100	1,881,935	100	2,112,338	100	2,392,739	100	1,803,083	100

Source: DGD/MINGI

V: Value (in billions of FCFA) %: Percentage of total exports

Chapter 3. CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

This Chapter is set up to present the essential issues identified during the survey of craftsmen in the wood, rattan and leather sector on the evolution of their activities. Also, it presents the main challenges and perspectives that challenge the sector in order to promote the competitiveness of the Cameroonian economy for the benefit of the promotion of the Label "Made in Cameroon".

3.1. Challenges

The strategic perimeter retained by the Government for the development of industries and services includes nine (9) driving sub-sectors among which we find the “Forest-Wood” and “Cotton-Textile-Confection-Leather” sectors. The challenge to be taken up, according to the SND30 for the leather trades is the exploration by the State of the possibilities of reviving the tanneries and the manufacturing industry of leather articles (boots, bags, belts, etc.). Furthermore, the challenge of structuring the domestic wood market in order to ensure a better supply of local wood processing industries is commendable and will allow craftsmen in the sector to have access to certain species.

The trades identified for the leather and wood sectors present a set of issues raised during the survey carried out during SIARC 2021: the majority of craftsmen interviewed mention:

- ❖ difficulties in supplying the raw materials and inputs needed for processing (state of the roads, massive export of raw materials, etc.);
- ❖ modern physical equipment;
- ❖ power cuts that cause delays in deliveries and create a breakdown in tradesman-customer trust;
- ❖ the lack of technical and financial supervision mentioned is also linked to the lack of knowledge of the existing technical and financial supervision structures associated with a fluid lack of communication which facilitates the consideration by the latter of the opportunities to be seized within the framework of the exercise of their profession.

Indeed, Cameroon is the country of Central Africa which practices the most breeding (cattle, goats, pigs). For this purpose, it abounds in sufficient quantity of the raw material to facilitate the leather transformation process. Moreover, the contribution to the economy of the wood, leather and rattan trades is not negligible in view of the summary table of foreign trade data presented specifically for these three products.

One of the major challenges related to craftsmanship remains the final quality of the products produced there in order to promote the competitiveness of the Cameroonian economy and to reduce the Chinese imports known to be continuously growing in their annual evolution.

In this regard, acquiring national, regional and international standards specifically for certain handicrafts with high economic profitability would be an essential asset for the competitiveness of Cameroonian handicrafts.

3.2. Outlook

In terms of prospects, certain key considerations should be relayed to the fore in order to establish the development policy for the crafts sector with a view to facilitating not only mass production of quality products capable of conquering markets under -regional and international.

For this purpose; artisans in the sectors studied should:

- ❖ benefit from material support; it is a question of providing artisans with modern equipment in order to improve the quality of products and optimize production. We would thus move from manual crafts to small artisanal production units;
- ❖ benefit from technical capacity building; in fact, the acquisition of new production tools/equipment is dependent on training for their use, but also craftsmen should be made aware of international standards on their production, they must also encourage strengthening their capacities in accounting, digitalization and other tools of modern entrepreneurship;
- ❖ be financially included; to promote the inclusion of artisans in order to facilitate access to financial products and services (savings, credit, etc.);

Also, in the same vein, support for the diversification of marketing channels for handicrafts by the State, would allow them to highlight their know-how and subsequently capture a greater quantity of requests. on their local, sub-regional and international products for the benefit of the promotion of "made in Cameroon".

One of the essential assets for the revitalization of crafts in Cameroon is linked to the Government's option to direct its consumption policy towards the development of economic and inclusive patriotism with a view to promoting the “made in Cameroon” label. On this subject, work is continuing in collaboration with all the ministries concerned under the coordination of MINEPAT.

The prospects for optimal growth of these craft trades are:

- ❖ the development of a synergy of action between the different actors;
- ❖ the need for a better structuring of the actors of the value chain (for example that the suppliers of raw materials are grouped together and supervised to improve access to them);

- ❖ development of access roads in isolated areas in order to reduce production costs;
- ❖ a policy of protectionism first on the export of raw materials would help to reduce exports of raw materials and imports of finished products;
- ❖ the standardization and labeling of finished products that would best encourage consumption.

Conclusion

All in all, Cameroon has a very diversified artisanal sector which stems from its natural resources and sometimes ancestral know-how. Despite the desire of the public authorities to support this sector, much remains to be done in terms of the availability of raw materials, access to financing to increase production and the quality of processed products (not always compliant with existing standards) which derive from Cameroonian craftsmanship.

In this perspective note, it was a question of evaluating the potential and the constraints of the wood, leather and rattan trades, then of analyzing with the craftsmen, the main concerned, the axes of valorization of the related craft products. It appears that at the administrative level, major projects are being carried out to increase the visibility of local products through the organization of regional and international craft fairs, the construction of craft villages by MINPMEESA and the provision of a virtual gallery which makes it possible to exhibit quality artisanal products from each region via a digital platform. These are supported in their tasks by private promoters and Social Economy Units who have chosen to create showcases exclusively dedicated to local products (example of the Cameroonian shop located at the MEEC-Yaoundé crossroads).

On the international level, the participation of Cameroonian craftsmen in foreign fairs and the setting up of the virtual gallery make it possible to make the products known beyond our borders.

These efforts are commendable but seem insufficient. Despite the difficult supply conditions and the lack of adequate equipment, Cameroonian artisans produce competitive and appreciable articles. Similarly, the Government's policy in terms of import-substitution mix and export promotion reveals the interest for this sector of going to the maximum of its production capacities to regulate imports of manufactured products and encourage the decline in exports of raw materials. .

To this end, local products can be put forward more by extension policy reforms in order to encourage everyone to consume "Made in Cameroon" through the promotion of economic patriotism.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PERSPECTIVE NOTE

THEME: ENHANCEMENT OF MADE IN CAMEROON THROUGH HANDICRAFTS

Objective : Discuss with a resource person on the theme in order to objectively and effectively identify the crafts with the potential to be valued and presented as *made in Cameroon*

Hello Mr/Mrs....

Q1. In view of the facts presented on the Example of Senegal, what crafts do you think have the potential to be valued to constitute an example of *made in Cameroon*

Q2. Why choose this profession?

Q3. In your opinion, how can this process of promoting this profession be done in practice?

Q3. In your opinion, what role could the State play in increasing the consumption of products from these trades and limiting imports?



INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PERSPECTIVE NOTE
THEME: ENHANCEMENT OF MADE IN CAMEROON THROUGH HANDICRAFTS

MINPMEESA

Job interview of: _____

CONFIDENTIALITY PROVISIONS

The information collected during this census is strictly confidential under the terms of Law No. 91/023 of December 16, 1991 on Censuses and Statistical Surveys which stipulates in its article 5 that: "individual information of an economic or financial nature appearing on any statistical survey questionnaire may under no circumstances be used for purposes of control or economic repression".

Objective: Discuss with a craftsman of the selected craft with the potential to be valued and presented as made in Cameroon. This discussion will make it possible to collect information to better understand the craft trade, the outlets, the specific difficulties...

Statement of Facts:

In Senegal, Senegalese sewing is a craft that contributes enormously to the development of the country. The sector brings significant foreign exchange into the country and is one of the five Accelerated Growth Strategy (SCA) clusters that Senegal relies on to be an emerging economy. This is even exhibited as the "Senegalese label". This artisanal trade is positioned at the end of the cotton sector encompassing the various trades namely: cotton farmers weavers dyers tailors.

The objective of our study is to exhibit a craft that has the potential to be developed in made in Cameroon that can limit imports and also make proposals to the government for greater involvement in this sector by setting up policies aimed at increasing the local consumption of products from this handicrafts trade.

Number: |_|_|_|_| **INTERVIEWER CODE** |_|_|_|_| **DATE:** |_|_|_|_|

Name of craftsman: _____

Region: _____ **Municipality:** _____

Name or corporate name _____

Phone 1: _____ **Phone 2:** _____

Q1. What is the origin of your expertise: _____

Q2. Do you improve your know-how through training? (Offered by individuals, offered by government)

Q3. What are your main raw materials and how do you supply?

raw material 1 (*quote*)

- raw material 2 (*quote*)

How do you estimate the production costs of the final product (expensive, affordable, cheaper) _____

Q4. What are the major difficulties you encounter in the exercise of your profession? _ _

Q5. To whom do you sell your products (to market resellers, to surface owners (shops, supermarkets, etc.), to individual customers)? _ _ _ _ _

Q6. Does your product have national (find simple words for standards and certification) or international certifications or standards?

Q7. What is your strategy for promoting and selling your product? _ _ _ _ _

Q8. What differences do you think there are between your products and imported items of the same category (quality, material, finish, durability, etc.)? _ _ _ _ _

Q9. How many varieties of different products do you offer customers? _ _ _ _ _

Q10. What comments do customers often make about your products? _____

Q11. What can the government do to help you gain a bigger market share and reduce the import of (name the substitute product) _____

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