

Strengthening national police structures

Support to the reform process of the Cameroon police service

What is the initial situation?

For a long time, Cameroon was regarded as one of the most politically stable countries in Africa. However, attacks by the Islamist group Boko Haram are prevalent in the north of the country in particular, while the Southwest and Northwest regions – both English-speaking – are seeing clashes between separatists and the military and security services. The eastern part of the country, meanwhile, is suffering from the ongoing instability in the Central African Republic, with groups of rebels crossing the border sporadically. Cameroon is also affected by illegal cross-border trade in valuable goods such as animals, timber, minerals and arms as well as human trafficking.

The **limited capacity for creating a secure environment for its citizens** and regular cases of **corruption** are undermining **public trust** in the state law enforcement authorities. An insufficient cooperation between the police and the public means that the state has little capacity to control crime, as reflected in high crime rates but low clearance rates. Cameroon lags well behind European countries in terms of the **number of police officers per head of population**.

The General Delegation for National Security (GDNS) has set itself the mission of tackling **institutional and organisational challenges** in basic training, in-service and advanced training. However, specialisations, such as forensics, are only offered as short courses. In addition, **training is barely, aligned with international standards and best practices**.

The GDNS is also working towards laying out a clear and transparent **human resource policy** based on requirements and expertise and structuring its **staff management** accordingly.

Programme title	Programme to build and strengthen the police structures in selected partner countries in Africa
Country component	Strengthening national police structures in Cameroon
Commissioned by	German Federal Foreign Office
Lead executing agency	Délégation Générale à la Sûreté Nationale (DGSN) (General Delegation for National Security/GDNS)
Overall term	July 2019 to December 2022
Budget (2019-2022)	Approx. EUR 2.77 million

A **digital system** for processing and transferring information on ongoing investigations, criminal proceedings, arrest warrants, fines and penalty notices, etc. is **hardly used** because of insufficient institutional and management capacities. Securing reliable internet connections, a power supply and IT equipment is a further challenge for the GDNS. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that **cooperation between the criminal investigation agency and the public prosecutor is rarely smooth**, causing investigations to be delayed or even abandoned altogether.

What is the goal?

The Cameroonian police has **greater capacity** to implement its reform plans, contribute to national and regional stability with professionalism, transparency and respect for the rule of law, and **regain public trust**.



Both photos:

Training forensic scientists

Right: Retrieving evidence from the crime scene

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Both photos:
Police officers practice securing evidence at the crime scene

How do we work?

GIZ has been supporting police reform processes in Africa on behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office since 2009. The programme is currently implementing **11 country- and region-specific components** on the continent. All processes are devised in close consultation with the partner institutions to meet their respective needs. The activities are based on existing national or international strategies and are implemented complementarily, focusing on compliance with legal standards and especially the **International Bill of Human Rights in police work**. The programme's measures place particular emphasis on **gender equality**. Our partners are given support in the following areas: **infrastructure and equipment, basic training, in-service and advanced training as well as organisational advice**.

The **country component Cameroon** is supporting the criminal investigation agency to scrutinise crimes more professionally and thus increase clearance rates. Cooperation between the police and other actors in the criminal justice system is to be enhanced, with a particular focus on strengthening the police internal complaint procedure which deals with officer misconduct. This aims at increasing public trust in the national security service.

What have we achieved so far?

The programme has already contributed to **improve the performance of the border police**. Building border posts and training border guards has increased the level of professionalism in the work being done. People living near the border are now demonstrably more satisfied with the service.

Moreover, **transnational organised crime is being combated** more effectively as border police have been trained in searching for drugs and in anti-terrorism measures. In addition, the programme has successfully supported the **criminal investigation agency** in Cameroon, with in-service training, use of the fingerprint database and the targeted deployment of forensics specialists, all helping to improve performance capacity. Investigative work is now being done more professionally, in compliance with the law and in accordance with international standards.

What more do we want to do?

The country component will support the criminal investigation agency to organise specialised training and increase the level of professionalism by introducing standard operating procedures. The nationwide use of the digital criminal database is another point of focus.

A needs analysis is set to study the cooperation currently under way between the police and actors in the criminal justice system. Based on its findings, this cooperation is then to be improved in a targeted manner, e.g. by organising workshops to exchange experiences. The introduction of standard operating procedures for applying the regulations of criminal proceedings will also improve cooperation in a structured way.

The internal complaint mechanism for handling complaints against police officers is to be digitalised and developed further in order to strengthen public trust in the police structures. The programme will foster a prompt dealing with complaints in order to increase public satisfaction with the mechanism and ultimately with the entire national police authority.

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