



CAMEROON BIOSECURITY PROJECT
*Development and Institution of a National Monitoring
and Control System (Framework) for Living Modified Organisms (LMOs)
and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)*

REVIEW OF BIOSECURITY AGENCIES, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

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Development.*

Under the Supervision of:

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&

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BWC	Biological Weapons Convention
CITES	Convention on International Trade of Endangered wild fauna and flora species
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISPM	International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures
MINCOMMERCE	Ministry of Trade
MINEPDED	Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development
ONPV	Organisation Nationale pour la Protection des Végétaux
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
RGDIP	Revue Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence
SODECOTON	Société de Développement du Coton
SFDI	Société Française pour le Droit International
USA	United States of America
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
ANOR	Standards and Quality Agency
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIE	Interministerial Committee of Environment
CNB	National Biosecurity Committee
CNCEDD	National Consultative Commission on Environment
CNCOSAC	National Committee on Codex Alimentarius and Food Safety
CNP	National Phytosanitary Council
IAS	Invasive and Alien Species
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FASA	Faculty of Agriculture and Agronomical Sciences
IPPC	International Convention for Plant Protection
IRAD	Institut de Recherches Agronomiques et de Développement
IRD	Institut de Recherches en Développement
ISO	International Standardisation Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LANACOME	Laboratoire national de contrôle des médicaments et d'expertises
MINADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MINATD	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
MINEE	Ministry of Water Resources and Energy
MINEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MINEPIA	Ministry Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries
MINESUP	Ministry of Higher Education
MINFI	Ministry of Finance
MINFOF	Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife
MINMIDT	Ministry of Industry, Mines and Technological Development
MINRESI	Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation
MINSANTE	Ministry of Public Health
NEA	National Executing Agency

NIMP	Normes Internationales pour les Mesures Phytosanitaires
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
OIE	Organisation Internationale des Epizooties
WHO	World Health Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
ONR	National Risks Observatory
UNO	United Nations Organization
LMO	Living Modified Organism
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
PSFE	Forest Environment Sector Programme (FESP)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Globalization of trade in agricultural products brings opportunities and risks. On the one hand, it generates wealth in countries exporting their produce to foreign markets and brings that produce to the tables of consumers in faraway lands. On the other hand, it opens new pathways for pests and diseases that can damage natural resources with accompanying economic and environmental consequences. In order to capture those opportunities and manage those risks, there is an increasing recognition of the need to integrate and improve coordination of regulatory activities designed to protect human, animal and plant life and health and the environment. Interest in *biosecurity* comes in response to these needs. It attempts to draw together the policy and regulatory frameworks for risk assessment and risk management across the sectors of food safety, animal life and health, (including fisheries) environmental protection and plant life and health. *biosecurity* aims to manage biological risks in these three sectors while protecting biodiversity and contributing to its sustainable use. In essence, *biosecurity* balances enthusiasm for international trade and travel with the need to protect against risks. Transparent and efficient controls in these sectors need not create unnecessary barriers to international trade; rather they facilitate it.

Biosecurity is considered to be an interdisciplinary activity that covers a wide range of subjects and approaches. As *biosecurity* works towards the integration of animal health, plant health, environmental health and food safety in order to streamline risk assessment and risk management practices, the division of responsibilities among national agricultural and environmental regulatory authorities comes under scrutiny. Controls and authorities for *biosecurity* matters tend to be scattered over a variety of ministries, such as the ministries of agriculture, livestock, health, finance, environment, commerce and industry.

The objective of a *biosecurity system* is to draw together all the relevant regulatory authorities under one system or to create a coordinating mechanism to streamline approaches to manage biological risks with the underlying principle being to establish an approach based on risk analysis. To implement the necessary coordination, Cameroon is determined to undertake a review of the existing national legal *biosecurity* frameworks and functions embedded in various ministries. This will aid in implementing any of the proposed frameworks that Cameroon could adopt to set-up an effective *biosecurity* framework without rivalries and overlaps.

This study involves the review of biosecurity agencies, guidelines and procedures and recommends a framework/system that could be implemented in Cameroon. Biosecurity requires the adoption of a set of attitudes and behaviour by people to reduce risk in all activities involving domestic, human, animal, and plant health, environmental protection, LMOs and invasive alien species. Biosecurity must be practical and sustainable for all – for producers, for traders, for intermediaries and service providers and for all those pursuing activities that could contain the seed of risk. Designing feasible framework/ legislation for biosecurity will require working with all key stakeholders to ensure that this happens and that those who will have to implement the measures accept the need to do so and see the benefits in doing so.

The review of related biosecurity utilised documents obtained from different Departments, Ministries and other stakeholders, it was observed that the legal document for Cameroon lacks specific or harmonised law for biosecurity, however there are relevant plant, animal and food safety laws and laws related to biotechnology embedded in several Ministries Departments and Services, In general, the institutional set up of the biosecurity examined, lack coordination and harmonisation for effective implementation of a biosecurity approach. Most of the sectors fall within the legal mandates of several ministries.

Biosecurity is considered to be an interdisciplinary activity that covers a wide range of subjects and approaches. It is an approach used for the reduction of the risk of negative impacts acquired through the opening of new pathways for the international exchange of goods which might be accompanied by pests and diseases that can damage natural resources resulting in economic and environmental hazards on animal and human health and food safety. As biosecurity works towards the integration of animal health, plant health, environmental health and food safety as practiced in some countries, it is mandatory to streamline risk assessment and risk management practices of all the sectors. In the case of Cameroon, it was observed that the controls and authorities for biosecurity matters tend to be scattered over a variety of ministries, such as the ministries of agriculture, livestock, health, finance, environment, commerce and industry.

The objective of this *Biosecurity System* was to draw together all the relevant regulatory authorities under one system or to create coordinating mechanisms to streamline approaches to manage biological risks with the underlying principle being to establish an approach based on risk analysis. To implement the necessary coordination, Cameroon decided to carry out an overview of the existing national legal *biosecurity* frameworks and functions embedded in various ministries. The information obtained assisted in proposing a framework that Cameroon could adopt to set-up an effective *Biosecurity framework* without rivalries and overlaps.

The present study therefore involved the review of biosecurity agencies, control guidelines and procedures and recommendation of a framework/system that could be implemented in Cameroon.

Biosecurity requires the adoption of a set of attitudes and behaviours by people to reduce risk in all activities involving domestic, human, animal, plant health, environmental protection, LMOs and invasive alien species (IAS). Biosecurity must be practical and sustainable for all including –producers, traders, intermediaries, service providers and for all users involved in activities that could contain some elements of risk. Designing a feasible framework/ legislation for biosecurity, calls for a cordial working relationship with all stakeholder ministries, private organisations, and Government agencies who will have to implement the measures to facilitate acceptability and see the benefits of implementation.

This report therefore summarises the findings of the biosecurity system in Cameroon with information drawn from various documents, and papers that were supplied to the consultants by government officials, scientists, experts, researchers and other stakeholders. Interviews were also conducted to obtain information from other users and some collaborative agencies.

The summaries here were based from the following areas;

Overview of Biosecurity Control Activities and Cross-cutting issues,
Terms of reference, Methodology and the objectives of the study

Overview and Cross-cutting issues

The result of the review of the existing biosecurity system in Cameroon, it was observed that, across all sectors (i.e. plant health, animal health, food safety, GMOs, Invasive Alien Species, the environment, and society), the current arrangements were being handled by different ministries, Departments and institutions with no coordination or reference to other ministries carrying out the same responsibility.

The review identified areas of deficiency, overlaps, gaps and weaknesses and provided information on the type of biosecurity systems that would substantially improve the current arrangements if made functional

Overview of legal and regulatory texts

In Cameroon, *Biosecurity* issues are not the responsibility of one ministry, department or agency of the country. Instead, several bodies have responsibility for, or are engaged in activities in this area. All these biosecurity sectors: Food Safety, Animal Health, Plant Health Environment Protection and Biosafety: are all covered by decrees thereby giving the ministries in charge legal instruments of implementation

Laws, non-compliance and conflicts

The current institutional arrangements for *biosecurity* in Cameroon, have been observed to have conflicts in the mandates of the various institutions involved in *biosecurity* activities. Also from the results of the review, it was observed that some of the laws covering some biosecurity operations are obsolete not upgraded to meet up international obligations e.g. (some of the IPPC ISPM's). In addition, Cameroon has no legislation nor laws concerning invasive alien species (IAS). Despite the fact that IAS have been known to be highly problematic and have become a risk to the agricultural economy of the countries wherever they established and spread. They are also known to pose severe threats to biodiversity and the environment.

The main objective of this Component 1 of the project, is to produce a comprehensive report on the current policy, regulatory and institutional biosecurity framework and a document outlining possible options for improved cross-sectoral planning and coordination of biosecurity operations in Cameroon which is in compliance with international guidelines and standards

Acknowledging therefore the challenges facing the uncoordinated sectorial activities of Cameroon's biosecurity system, the country requested and obtained some assistance/ funding to carry out a review of the existing biosecurity capability.

In addition, the consultants delivered a draft report on the results of the review to the task force of the component. The report presented the roles and responsibilities of Biosecurity system in Cameroon with recommendations on the best biosecurity system to be adopted by the country

The methodology used for this study consisted mostly of literature review and on consultation with the key stakeholders by the National and International Consultants. Most of the key stakeholders were selected by the Consultants with reference to the Terms of reference and with the support of the PCU (Biosecurity Project Coordination Unit), taking into consideration the need to cover all the sectors of biosecurity (food safety, plant health, animal health, biosafety, invasive species).

At the end of the review of the mandates and functions of the various institutions responsible for biosecurity operations and the analysis of the legal framework covering the subject areas of biosecurity: the outcome of the analysis of the overview results, demonstrated the weakness, gaps and strengths of the existing legal framework and implementation tools.

The result of the analysis enabled the consultants to consider possible biosecurity systems that could be adopted for Cameroon as:

At the institutional level, three options can be explored, namely:

- Option 1: Place biosecurity under the watchful eye of a sectoral ministry;
- Option 2: Create a Ministry in charge of biosecurity;
- Option 3: Create an Agency or Authority in charge of Biosecurity.

At the legislative level, there are two options for the Government, namely:

- Option 1: adopt a text which deals with a comprehensive vision and addresses biosecurity issue in an integrated manner in all its aspects;
- Option 2: Revise the sectoral legislations to better take into account biosecurity concerns.

Conclusion

- The review showed that the existing legal documents lack specific or harmonised laws for biosecurity, however there are some relevant plant, animal and food safety laws related to biotechnology embedded in the decrees in several Ministries, Departments and Services, In general, the institutional setup of the biosecurity operations examined, lacked coordination and harmonisation for effective implementation of any biosecurity approach.
- With the advent of new technology and other forces responsible for the increased pace of globalisation; biosecurity risks are changing due to the expansion in movement of humans, livestock, animal products; increased volume and range of plants/plant products traded; increased international movement and distribution of plant species; and increased changes in ecosystems. The location of Cameroon in West and Central Africa, the suitability of Cameroon's diverse climatic conditions for pest and disease establishment means that Cameroon will be a front-line country for combating new biosecurity incursions.

- Also, regional and international trade, movement of goods continuous climate changing conditions increases the level of biosecurity risk for Cameroon. In this context, the country requires an efficient biosecurity framework that will not only protect the agricultural economy and the prevention of environmental hazards in the country but also cater for those of her trading partners, collaborators and the CEMAC countries

Recommendations

Therefore, acknowledging the challenges facing Cameroun biosecurity activities scattered in different ministries resulting in:

- Overlap of responsibilities
- Multiple approaches to the same issue
- Repetition of same functions
- Inadequate trained personnel in the different institutions
- Lack or inappropriate tools and infrastructure
- Outdated legislation
- Non-compliance to international standards and obligation

The Consultants hereby recommend that, for an efficient harmonised and workable biosecurity system, Cameroon should adopt:

The creation of a new body (Biosecurity National Authority) at a higher level, to exercise an oversight and coordinating role over all sectors concerned with biosecurity. The use of the proposed coordinating framework presented at the end of the report should be presented to all stakeholders for discussions and validation before implementation and adoption.