Camel growing in Cameroons North region for meat consumption.

Cameroon government increases budget for livestock, aquaculture value chains

By Elias Ngalame

The Cameroonian government has adopted a budget of 16.5 billion fcfa for the development of livestock and aquaculture value chains for the 2026 financial year.

The budget for 2026 increased by 3 billion fcfa compared to that of 13.5 billion fcfa in 2025.

The Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries, Dr Taïga, said the increased funding will help scale up livestock and aquaculture production, diversify markets, boost economic growth and generate rural employment and income.

Dr Taiga spoke during a meeting of the steering committee of the Project for the Development of Livestock and Pisciculture Value Chains (PDCVEP) held recently in Yaounde.

A key plan for the next three years is the funding an incubation programme for young agro-pastoral entrepreneurs holding higher education qualifications, the national project coordinator Dr Aboubakar Njoya said.

Some 275 young people have been recruited across 11 incubation centres in all 10 regions of the country, with 266 completing incubation with viable business projects.

Each of these graduates received a FCFA 1 million business start-up or reinforcement grant.

The project plan for 2026 includes the enrolment of a second cohort of entrepreneurs to the incubation centres.

Some 300 recently trained agronomists and pisciculture professionals will be equipped with techniques for fish production, processing and value addition, the minister said.

The programme is part of national efforts to strengthen the country's aquaculture sector and reduce reliance on imported fish products. The training was facilitated by the

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Maritime Fishing Development Fund, a government structure to facilitate access to funding by actors in the sector.

Past training under the project focused on pond management, fish nutrition, artificial breeding methods and conservation techniques such as smoking and other post-harvest processes.

Contracts have been signed between some producers and development partners for the improvement of cattle fattening centres, including three located in ranches operated by the Livestock Development and Exploitation Corporation (SODEPA).

With technical support from the Special Fund for Intercommunal Equipment and Intervention (FEICOM), the project has commissioned 17 meat and fish market facilities nationwide, while eight additional markets are under construction.

Project officials noted the need to finalise contracts for industrial abattoirs in Douala and Yaoundé, and to monitor the progress of construction of the Bamenda abattoir.

Plans for 2026 also include the construction of two pisciculture broodstock production stations and the distribution of 360 improved pig breeding stock.

These measures, the government says, aim to expand productive capacity in key value chains and support domestic production.

"The government is keen on sourcing for more funding from international partners in the years ahead to achieve this goal," the minister said.

Efforts to expand aquaculture are in line with the national strategy to boost local fish production by an additional 10,000 tonnes annually by 2027 under the PDCVEP, supported by external financing equivalent to approximately 55 billion fcfa from the African Development Bank.

These initiatives are designed to reduce heavy reliance on fish imports, strengthen food security and expand rural incomes, officials say.

The incubation programme and infrastructure investments are expected to contribute to job creation and improved market linkages for livestock and fish products.

With young entrepreneurs entering the market and new facilities in place, project stakeholders stress the importance of continued implementation and monitoring to ensure that investments translate into economic outcomes in the rural economy.

"These infrastructure projects will be implemented in phases with regular monitoring from our technical experts," Dieudonne Esomba, a technical adviser in the Ministry of livestock, noted.

Cameroon still faces a significant production-demand gap estimated at about 270,000 tonnes annually against domestic demand around 500,000 tonnes.

The government's Integrated Agropastoral and Fish Import-Substitution Plan (PIISAH) 2024-2026 sets targets to expand national fish production and reduce reliance on imports.

The plan aims to increase domestic output to more than 450,000 tonnes by 2030, cutting dependency to around 3.0 percent of total needs.

Fish remains one of the most consumed sources of animal protein in Cameroon. National production is far from meeting consumption levels required by a growing population, which contributes to sustained import flows and pressure on foreign exchange reserves.

According to government and FAO figures, fish products contribute significantly to overall protein intake, with per-capita consumption estimated around 15.4 kg per year and fish representing a substantial share of animal protein in household diets.