

Evaluation summary

WEEECAM Project E-waste Sustainable Management in Cameroon

Country : **Cameroon**

Theme : **Waste management**

Consultants : **Florian Marchadour (Gret), Boussoura Talla (independant)**

Date : **January to April 2023**

Key datas of FFEM support

Project Name: WEEECAM

Project Number : CCM 1407

FFEM Financial support: 1 700 000 €

Signature Date : October 1st 2017

Duration : 5 years

Context

As in every country in the world, the amount of generated WEEE is increasing significantly in Cameroon. In 2019, the production of WEEE in the cities of Douala and Yaoundé was estimated at 23,000 T/year by BRGM. That production of WEEE/capita was expected to almost double by 2030, raising from 10.6 to 19.7 kg/year.

Because of the lack of adequate WEEE treatment infrastructure, less than 1% of generated WEEE are properly managed. The remaining part is managed by informal sector waste pickers whose practices contribute to environmental issues (POPs contamination, heavy metals in the soil, CO2 emissions, etc.) and public health issues (respiratory, dermatological and eye diseases).

Project management

To tackle these critical issues, the NGOs *Solidarité Technologique* and *La Guilde Européenne du Raid*, firstly launched a pilot project on computer WEEE treatment in Yaoundé in 2011 (PRODESO project), and in secondly, in 2017 when obtained funding from the FFEM.

La Guilde du Raid managed the FFEM funding (finance, reporting, institutional, etc.) and fund raising from other donors (Syctom, City of Paris, etc.), while *Solidarité technologique* managed the project operational activities (implementation, operations management, etc.).



Objectives

Main objective :

Demonstrate the feasibility and sustainability of an E-waste recovery and treatment business model in developing countries.

Specific objective :

- Implement a large-scale WEEE collection system in Douala and Yaoundé
- Implement a large-scale WEEE processing system that optimizes environmental impacts and achieve economical and social sustainability
- Strengthen the existing institutional framework, while contributing to structure of the business sector
- Capitalize on the project's lesson learned to facilitate replication and improve the chances of success for other initiatives in developing countries.

Performance evaluation

Pertinence: an ambitious project but disproportioned

The project was based on an existing diagnosis and initial data that created an "optical effect", particularly in terms of volumes to be processed. On this basis, a "theoretical" economic model was established. In the course of implementation, this initial diagnosis proved to be far removed from reality, making the planned economic model unviable. This problem was exacerbated by the absence of initially confirmed co-financing, which has prevented the treatment unit from being set up to date. Translated with DeepL.com (free version). The project started with a good operational base professional WEEE and theoretical knowledge of household WEEE, but no experience of D3Em. Most stakeholders were well identified, with the exception of the informal sector, which nevertheless plays a predominant role in the sector. Lastly, awareness of the issues was raised fairly quickly, but the operational implementation of the project's reorientation took some time (due to external circumstances).

Coherence: a rooted project but lack of maturity from institutionnal sector with a too short duration

The project has become firmly rooted in international and national strategies and regulations, despite the institutional sector's lack of maturity. Active relations were maintained with various technical and financial partners in Cameroon and France. The duration of the project was too short (5 years) to achieve its objectives. On the one hand, the project's technical and financial resources were well-dimensioned, despite certain inconsistencies. On the other hand, operating costs were generally under-dimensioned (human resources, material purchase costs).

Effectivity: : A project more effective in phase 2, with mitigating circumstances

During the first phase of the project, the difficulties encountered didn't allow to reach objectives (majority of planned results were not achieved), partly due to major external events at the beginning of the 3rd year (ST's President death, project manager resignation, COV19 crisis). Thanks to the team's strong commitment, the project managed to maintain execution and the second phase of the project is now well underway ("medium" average), with significant work still to be done to formalize knowledges.

Efficiency: High costs compared to achieved results, which decreased in phase 2

Implementation costs were high in phase 1, but decreased in phase 2. The project faced to some difficulties in team management (regular turnover, low salaries, feeling of splitting staff) and the fund raising for co-financing was time-consuming for the teams (mainly for the project manager).

Impacts: Low impacts in short-term period which could be more significant in long-term

The impact on behavioral change has been fairly low in the short term, but can be potentially high in the long term; environmental impacts have been very limited (due to the small quantity of WEEE collected and processed), as social impacts: despite good general working conditions, jobs remain precarious and teams fairly unstable.

Sustainability: Ongoing Sustainability in process, not really achieved

Although the project is totally sustainable from an environmental point of view, ST's current governance structure implementation is still ongoing, and there are still a several tasks to be carried out before achieving sustainability: salary increases, operational activities transfer to a local organization, obtaining external financial support.

Additional value of FFEM support: a positive FFEM support for the project

Although the FFEM funding requires a very high level of co-financing (70% initially), its support provided a guarantee for other donors and facilitated institutional relations at both international and local levels. In addition to that, the FFEM teams demonstrated a strong commitment to the project.

Recommendations & lessons learnt

In the short term, the main recommendation to ensure the sustainability of the WEEE processing business in Yaounde is to **transfer operations to a local private operator able to ensure the development of the business, and to support this operator technically and financially by implementing a payment system based on quantity of processed WEEE.**

For project managers, the main recommendations are as follows: 1) Clarify the governance of the *Solidarité Technologique* association, 2) Revise upwards the staff salary scale (particularly workshop staff) to include a variable component based on results, 3) Focus part of the treatment activity on large equipment, 4) Emphasize equipment repair and the resale of parts 5) Diversify waste management activities by collecting other types of waste 6) Strengthen public communication 7) Support lobbying of national authorities to set up an EPR managed by a private eco-organization 8) Lobby the GEF (and other donors and institutions) for partial funding of operating costs for the Douala treatment center over a minimum 10-year period 9) Outsource capitalization, in order to focus on the operational part of WEEE processing and advocacy.

For donors (in particular the FFEM), the main recommendations are as follows : 1) Evaluate the maturity of the institutional sector regarding E-waste, in particular the clear willingness of national authorities to move forward with the regulatory framework and its application, 2) Set up financing lines that are totally secure from a financial point of view, with a long-term commitment (eg: 10 years), 3) Propose lines of financing to directly support these operational structures in the South, based on actual operating results, 4) Support structures that already exist or have proven their worth (including the private sector), and particularly those with a "Social Business" approach, 5) Propose lines of financing for "scaling up", which remain fairly rare to date 6) Prioritize measured and realistic projects