

Cameroon: Société Générale and EIB unlock 10 billion FCFA support for SME investment



©EIB

- **Cameroon SME Minister launches financing program to benefit hundreds of SMEs**
- **Credit line accelerates investment with more flexible financing conditions**

Société Générale and the European Investment Bank (EIB) today confirmed agreement of a new joint initiative to support economic development across Cameroon. The new financing is part of the European Investment Bank's broader support for private sector development and help to increase the economic resilience of companies across Africa and around the world facing economic, social and health challenge and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The regional initiative was formally launched at a ceremony in Douala attended by M. Achille Bassilekin III, Minister for small and medium sized companies, social economy and artisans, Mme. Mareme Mbaye Ndiaye, Directeur General, Société Générale Cameroon and M. Nikolaos Milianitis, Head of the EIB Regional Representation to Central Africa.

"This new credit line will unlock investment and support jobs by companies across Cameroon and central Africa. Cameroon welcomes the strong support from

the Société Générale and the European Investment Bank. This new credit line will ensure that companies in Cameroon can better face the global economic recession ." said Minister Achille Bassilekin III.

"Ensuring a lasting impact of the fight against COVID-19 requires joint action. Africa and Europe are working together to tackle the impact of the pandemic, in particular through enabling enhanced private sector investment in sectors most impacted by the health crisis. Today's agreement between Société Générale and the European Investment Bank, the EU Bank, demonstrates this cooperation in action. Team Europe, the European Union and member states, hope that this new support totalling 10 billion FCFA, or EUR 10 million, will enable companies across Cameroon to restart their businesses." said Sebastien Bergeon, Charge d'affaires of the European Union Delegation to Cameroon.

The new scheme is available immediately and will be managed by Société Générale in Cameroon. The 10 billion FCFA will include working capital, enable increased backing for investment projects and include more flexible disbursement conditions to reflect the acute and sudden challenges facing African business.

"Through its "Grow with Africa" strategy Société Générale Group is enabling sustainable development across Africa through financing for SMEs, infrastructure, agriculture and renewable energy. In 2019 Société Générale Cameroon inaugurated the Maison de la PME to provide key support for local companies and entrepreneurs. Following positive results we are going one step further to enhance support for private sector development in partnership with the EIB. It is crucial ensure access to finance during the pandemic to protect jobs, unlock investment and contribute to economic growth.." said Mme. Mareme Mbaye Ndiaye, Directeur General, Société Générale Cameroon.

"This new targeted support for private sector investment brings together technical expertise and detailed understanding of local business needs from two international partners committed to delivering transformational investment across Africa. The new scheme will ensure that local companies can address the impact of COVID-19, continue to invest and create jobs. Once again Team Europe is enabling a rapid and effective response to COVID-19 challenges with a global partner." said Thomas Östros, European Investment Bank Vice President.

Ensuring access to financing during the COVID-19 pandemic is even more important to protect employment, unlock business investment and enable economic growth.

The new SocGen-EIB COVID-19 economic resilience financing programme will help African companies most impacted by business uncertainty and challenges linked to the pandemic. It allows working capital expenses including among others payment of salaries, social security and tax, without a minimum maturity requirement to help mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19.

Companies involved in manufacturing, commerce, agriculture, tourism and transport will be able to benefit from the new cooperation between Société

Générale and the European Investment Bank.

A similar credit line provided jointly by the Société Générale and the EIB is in place in Benin. Other initiatives are currently being financing in central Africa and will be announced in the coming weeks.