

Bouaké, Ivory Coast

Partner city

Status of the project: ongoing technical assistance



Basic Information

Urban area: 120 km²

Population: 800,000 | Growth rate: +3%

GDP per capita: USD 1,700 (national)

Modal Share*:

*Source: Urban Master Plan, 2014.

Informal public transport (Gbaka): 2%

Private cars: 8%

Private motorbikes or 2-wheelers: 74%

Taxis: 15%

Freight vehicles: 1%

National GHG emissions per capita: 0.98 (tCO₂eq)

Exposure to climate change: HIGH

Regional capital city

Context

Bouaké is located in the center of the country, at the intersection of two important international road axes connecting Abidjan, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, southern Guinea and Liberia. The city is also a rail and air travel hub, as well as home to an important wholesale market of regional food products which is at the heart of its economy.

Transport system

The road networks

The main road network is well maintained and is organized around the North-South and East-West axis of the National Road Network, and other important axes connecting the center to the airport in the north-west and the military camp, in the north-east.

The secondary network is underdeveloped, resulting in the isolation of some neighborhoods. The tertiary network providing service within residential areas is generally difficult to drive.

Urban transport

An inventory carried out in 2014 estimates a total linear distance of 582 km, including 122 km (20%) of paved roads, mainly in the city center, 135 km (23%) of passable roads, maintained by the services of the city, and the rest, non-drivable roads serving in particular the peripheral districts. Individual motorization is relatively low, and parking is not yet a major problem, although it is gradually increasing. The road rights-of-way are wide but they are not designed to organize parking, nor to ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists. The practice of transport by bicycle is also very rare.

There is no longer a public transport company. The latter (The STUB), created in 2009, went bankrupt in 2011. A large part of the transport offer is provided by artisanal transport: moto-taxis, taxis and minibuses ("Gbakas"). Taxis represent a very important part of the rolling vehicles but pose certain problems, in particular because of their frequent use of butane gas as fuel, which brings great risks of explosions. Minibuses represent a smaller share of traffic but are more structured. The Ministry of Transport is currently planning to re-deploy a public transport service (bus) in 2021.

The most important mode of motorized transport is two-wheelers (including motorcycle taxis). It is economical, fast, better suited to road conditions and less sensitive to traffic congestion. However, motorcycles and moto-taxis have a predominant presence (60% in 2016) in accidents. Although hard to quantify, walking is an important mode of mobility.

Intercity transport

Interurban transport is partly provided by large transport companies, by coaches (UTB, AVS, Malex). Their private bus stations, located in tight spaces in the heart of the urban grid, attract commercial activities around them as well as transport operators creating very important traffic disruption points. The Ministry of Transport has been seeking since 2017 to promote the creation of a bus station for all carriers on the outskirts of the city, but this choice still poses problems.

The regional service, for the transport of people and goods, is provided by private vehicles (taxi-brousses), which tend to create informal stations throughout the city with strong negative impacts on traffic, and by minibuses (20 to 30 seats, called Massa / Dianra or Badjan) which sometimes use private spaces as stations, but more often public sites. These sites are rarely developed.

Freight

The transport of goods in the urban area is mainly provided by small vehicles (tricycles, pickups or tarpaulin vans), whose traffic and parking contribute greatly to traffic congestion. Heavy truck traffic and parking, especially those that cross the city without a more interesting alternative route, have a very negative impact on traffic and on the condition of the roads.

Institutional context

The local authorities most involved in issues related to improving urban mobility are the Town Hall of Bouaké, the Regional Directorate of Transport and the Prefecture. Local institutions do not yet have the means to organize and regulate the transverse and multi-sectoral issue related to mobility. This results in a lack of regulation and police power.

Challenges and main aim of the SUMP

Mobility in Bouaké faces several problems at the same time. They include:

- The overall organization of the city, with the presence of a single center, which attracts a lot of urban travels, and the low density of the urban grid which extends travel distances;
- The poor quality of the road network, its weak functional hierarchy and its radial organization which converges towards the city center;
- The lack of proper use of the asphalt-surfaced road (deficient organization of traffic, management of intersections and parking, serious road safety issues);
- Traffic congestion;

- Lack of public mass transport service. The trips from and to certain neighborhoods is limited to the use of moto-taxis and walking;
- The omnipresence of low-capacity passenger and goods transport service/paratransit sector;
- The local institutional weakness in being able to organize and regulate a transverse and multi-sectoral problem;
- A lack of regulation through the taking of coercive measures and the absence of police power regarding transport.

The challenge for the city of Bouaké today is to be able to adopt a strategy for sustainable urban mobility in line with the Urban Master Plan (SDU). This strategy is expected to take into account the current and future challenges linked to climate change and sustainable development, as well as accessibility.

Support from the Partnership

Technical Assistance: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)

Funded by: European Commission

Funding amount: EUR 400,000

Implemented by: AFD and CODATU through the MobiliseYourCity Africa Program

Local counterpart: Municipality of Bouaké

Status of implementation

Project start: 2021 Q1

Expected project completion: 2022 Q1

Completed outputs:

- Elaboration of specific Terms of Reference
- Launch of the consulting call
- Evaluation of the proposals
- Selection of the consultant and administrative assignment of the mission (contract signed in January 2021)
- Beginning of the assignment (Kick-off meetings scheduled for March 2021).

Next expected outputs:

- Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between a delegate of the Municipality of Bouaké and AFD (2021 Q1)

Highlights in the past year

55 M€ loan approved by AFD to modernize interurban transport infrastructure around Bouaké

The Ivorian government and AFD ratified a 55 million euros loan agreement in June 2020 to continue the financing of the rehabilitation of the northern road between Bouaké and Ferkessedougou (220 km), the replacement of 11 structures in rural areas by metal bridges, the rehabilitation of the Felix-Houphouët-Boigny bridge (under way). The first part of this project has been financed by France through a debt to investment conversion mechanism and an AFD loan (for the northern road project), for a total amount of 311 million euros.

Regarding urban mobility in Abidjan, the Ivorian government and AFD signed an agreement to cofinance (with the World Bank) the construction of a 20 km East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line equipped with articulated electric buses between the communes of Yopougon and Bingerville in Abidjan, etc. The BRT is a component of the Abidjan Urban Mobility Project (PMUA).

The impact of COVID-19

The end of the political crisis at the beginning of the 2010s enabled the country to record one of the strongest GDP growths in the world, with growth rates still above 7% since 2012, despite a slight slowdown in recent years. This strong growth has helped raise the standard of living of Ivoirians, even though the current poverty rate remains high, above 40%. It is still too early to anticipate precisely the consequences of the COVID crisis on the Ivorian economy, with opposite effects (increase in public spending, reduction in the energy bill and in export earnings following the decline in certain agricultural products, especially cocoa and cashew nuts).

Regarding the study, the entire process of launching the consultation was slowed down in 2020. At this stage, we cannot predict the impact that the health crisis will continue to have on the development of the study.

In the first activities to be carried out during the start-up phase of the SUMP, the consultant is expected to analyze the post-crisis situation in Bouaké through the following studies:

- A qualitative analysis of the transport situation, comparing it to the situation prior to the health crisis. In particular, the following points should be answered:
 - » Is the current situation similar to the situation before the crisis?
 - » If not, is the situation expected to return to normal, and if so, by what timeframe?

This qualitative analysis will be based on interviews, field visits and available data.

- On the basis of this assessment, the consultant will identify:
 - » The risks and opportunities arising from the impact of COVID on urban mobility in Bouaké.
 - » The impact of COVID on the SUMP development process.