

Bouaké, Ivory Coast

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)

National GHG emissions per capita: 0.98 (tCO₂eq)

Exposure to climate change: HIGH

Region capital city

Context

Bouaké is situated 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. It is home to an important wholesale market of regional food products which is at the heart of its economy.

Transport system

The main network is well maintained and organized along central axes of the National Road Network. The secondary road network is underdeveloped. This results in the isolation and spatial segregation of some neighborhoods. The tertiary road network within residential areas is almost not driveable due to their current status. In 2014, only 20% of the 582km road network had been paved (122km) – mainly in the city center. Another 23% (135km) was considered passable. There are no parking problems due to the currently low rates of individual motorisation. However, the wide roads are not designed for parking nor to ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. This situation could pose additional challenges in the future.

After the recent public transport company (*Société de Transport Urbain de Bouaké* - STUB) went bankrupt in 2011, there has not been a predecessor. Consequently, a majority of the mobility demand is covered by informal transport. Due to the frequent use of butane gas as fuel and the related risk of explosions, informal taxis are a particularly challenging part of the rolling vehicle stock. Minibuses ("Gbakas") represent a smaller share of traffic but are more structured. Plans for the re-deployment of the public transport service through buses exist in the Ministry of Transport. To enhance intercity transport, a regional bus terminal is planned at the outskirts of the city to reduce traffic disruption in the center. Currently, informal modes (e.g. minibuses with 20 to 30 seats, called Massa / Dianra or Badjan) dominate the interregional transport of people and goods.

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.

The transport of goods in the urban area is mainly provided by small vehicles (tricycles, pickups, or tarpaulin vans), whose traffic and parking contribute to traffic congestion. Heavy truck traffic and parking, especially those that cross the city in lack of an alternative route, have an extremely negative impact on traffic and on the condition of the roads.

Institutional context

The local authorities most involved in issues 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 issues related to mobility. This results in a lack of regulation and police power.

The local counterpart has no mandate and responsibility to finance mass public transport infrastructure. It does not have authority to borrow from international finance sources. There are no systems and procedures in place to monitor, evaluate and report on urban mobility.

Challenges and main aim of the SUMP

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

- The overall mono-centric organization of the city, which attracts a lot of urban travel, and the low density of the urban grid which extends travel distances.
- The inadequate 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 are limited to the use of moto-taxis and walking.
- The omnipresence of low-capacity passenger and goods transport service/paratransit sector.
- Lacking local institutional capacities to organize and regulate such transverse and multi-sectoral problems.
- 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 consider the current and future challenges linked to climate change and sustainable development, as well as the specific mobility needs of people in vulnerable situations (children, physically disabled, pregnant women, etc.).

The technical assistance contributes to institutional strengthening by collecting data on the current situation, supporting the authorities in identifying the main challenges and best measures to face them, and organising tailor-made workshops on key mobility issues.

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 Q2

Completed outputs:

- Elaboration of specific Terms of Reference and selection of consultants (contract signed in January 2021)
- Diagnosis of urban mobility survey on mobility practice

Next expected outputs:

- Mobility scenarios: business as usual, improved, and ambitious
- Urban mobility model
- Scenario selection and development of measures

Highlights

The SUMP assists Bouaké and Ivorian authorities in improving and securing urban mobility in Bouaké

In 2021, the team in charge of the SUMP focussed on two main tasks:

- i. Realise an important campaign for data collection to give a precise picture of mobility habits of Bouakéans;
- ii. Complete the diagnosis of urban mobility situation and key issues of the city.

This diagnosis has been approved by the Steering Committee in 2021, and the stakeholders are now prioritising the main challenges and working on the best measures to tackle them, with two scenarios: one leading to an improvement of the current situation, and a more ambitious one. In the first semester of 2022, the authorities along with the technical assistance team will discuss the scenarios for each issue, their cost and level of priority, to finalise an action plan with concrete measures and policies on the short, middle and long terms.

In the meantime, AFD allocated funding to a research project implemented by the *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (IRD, French) and the University of Bouaké that will collect data on road accidents. The data is collected by the police forces and health workers and will be automatically updated in an app to show in real-time how many accidents have occurred and where they have taken place. The results will be considered in the SUMP process.