Kurunegala, Sri Lanka

Partner city

Status of the project: **Ongoing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan**

Basic Information

Urban area: **11 km²**

Population: **122,172** | Growth rate: **1.4%**

Region capital city

GDP per capita: **USD 3,853**

Modal Share:

- **Formal public transport: 25.3%**
- **Informal private transport: 16.2%**
- **Walking: 11.8%**
- **Cycling: 1%**
- **Private cars: 22.3%**
- **Private motorbikes or 2-wheelers: 18.7%**
- **Taxis: 1.3%**
- **Other: 3.4%**

National GHG emissions per capita: **1.67 (tCO_2eq)**

Exposure to climate change: **LOW**

Context

Kurunegala has 120,000 inhabitants, including 30,000 in the urban core. Despite being a relatively small city for Sri Lanka, it is the capital city of both the North-western Province and the Kurunegala District.

According to the National Physical Plan (NPP) updated by the National Physical Planning Department (NPPD) of the Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development (MMWD) in 2018, the Kurunegala urban area could grow to 1,000,000 inhabitants by 2050. The city is also expected to meet an annual growth rate of 2.5%, the highest in Sri Lanka. Kurunegala is expected to become one of the main urban centres – even a "metro region" – of the East-West Development Corridor that guides the spatial and economic development at the national scale. Consequently, Kurunegala will face many challenges regarding urban development, employment, and transportation. The city must plan its internal transport as well as connections with the other cities of the corridor and with Colombo, the national Capital City.

The city has a railway station (located in the Southeast of the urban core) and is located on a rail axis. However, it does not play a major role in daily commuting as people usually commute by private motorised vehicles (car, motorbike and tuk-tuk) or by public bus. Currently, the Municipality of Kurunegala (the SUMP local counterpart) does not have the mandate or responsibility to finance mass public transport infrastructure nor the authority to borrow from international finance sources. The running costs of the collective transport system are, however, part of the public authority's budget.

The objective of the project is the elaboration of a SUMP for the city of Kurunegala from the ground up since there is neither an existing public mass transit system nor an existing transport master plan for the city.

Support from the Partnership

Technical assistance: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)

Funded by: AFD

Funding amount: EUR 400,000

Implemented by: AFD through MobiliseYourCity Asia

Local counterpart: Municipality of Kurunegala

Supported Activities:

- MobiliseDays (35 participants)
- Diagnosis workshop (32 participants)
- Public Transport focus group
- Scenario analysis workshop

Status of the SUMP process

Project start: Q1 2019

Project completion: Q4 2021

Completed outputs:

- Inception report (September 2019)
- Diagnosis report (March 2020)
- Scenario elaboration and comparison report (1st Draft, May 2020/ Revised Draft, December 2020)
- Final SUMP report

SUMP key measures and cost estimates

The following table highlights the most significant measures identified in the SUMP.

Measure	Cost Estimate	Implementation Period
Introduce a road hierarchy for Kurunegala	60,000	2021-2023
Speed regulation and enforcement	80,000	2021-2023
Parking management	60,000	2021-2023
	120,000	2023-2026
Outer ring road		
Develop green corridors/pedestrian and bicycle lanes	60,000	2021-2023
City center calming	120,000	2021-2023
Introduce a linkedin ATM system for the city including PT priority at signals	100,000	2021-2023
	100,000	2023-2026

Measure	Cost Estimate	Implementation Period
Develop a transit corridor	To be costed in feasibility study (FS)	TBD in FS
Provide mini-bus stands at the city centres	To be costed in FS	TBD in FS
Provide park-and-ride at the city centres	To be costed in FS	TBD in FS
Develop a multimodal hub at the central rail station	To be costed in FS	TBD in FS
City bus network (improvement of current services)	80,000	2021-2023
City bus network (Public Service Obligation)	200,000	2023-2026
Develop ITS for Public Transport (ticketing, digital mapping)	60,000	2021-2023
	120,000	2023-2026
Develop fare integration within the KMC area (for PT, rail)	200,000	2023-2026
School bus parking	60,000	2023-2026
Freight transport	120,000	2023-2026
Bike and e-rickshaw promotion	200,000	2021-2023
Preparation & promulgation of auto rickshaw regulations	120,000	2021-2023
Institutional support and progressive development of coordinated urban transport arrangements	440,000	2021-2023
Improve pedestrian and vehicular access to the Kurunegala Teaching Hospital	F.S to be costed	F.S to be costed
Street design toward the inclusion of pedestrians and non-motorised transport	120,000	2021-2023
Muttetugala overpass	F.S to be costed	F.S to be costed

Projected impacts

Indicator	Impact 2030 (SUMP vs BAU)	Baseline - 2018	Projected 2030 BAU	Projected 2030 SUMP scenario
Total annual GHG emissions (Mt CO_2eq)	-0.0002 Mt CO_2eq	0.0827 Mt CO_2eq	0.0935 Mt CO_2eq	0.0933 Mt CO_2eq
Veh.km of formal public transport Increase of the availability of public transport	Formal public transport: 7,698 Veh.km	Formal public transport: 51,209 Veh.km	Formal public transport: 66,748 Veh.km	Formal public transport: 74,446 Veh.km

Highlights in the past year

Kurunegala's SUMP prioritises measures for their implementation

The implementation of the SUMP has been structured by identifying primary and secondary actions. The former refers to main SUMP projects that will be developed and implemented on their own and on a priority basis. The latter will function to enhance the impact of primary projects and are considered as subordinate to these.

In total, 26 measures were identified in the SUMP, and two development scenarios were proposed that could be implemented separately or collectively, depending on their level of ambition. Considering the project objectives, scenario two was finalised for implementation. It focused on medium-term goals (until the year 2025) regarding public transport development and implementation of governance structures overall shaping the mobility framework for the city of Kurunegala.

The Kurunegala Municipal Council (KMC), the Road Development Authority (RDA), and the Sri Lankan Transport Board (SLTB) oversee the implementation of most of these measures. The funding for the different measures is expected to be assumed with support from International Funding Institutions (IFI), and will be complimented by KMC, RDA, and the Urban Development Authority (UDA). The financial mechanism for these measures is rather complex as it involves multiple stakeholders for the different measures, and to date remains unclear.

Political unrest puts Kurunegala's mobility plan on hold

Due to the current political climate in Sri Lanka, the approval and implementation of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan of Kurunegala has been put on hold. As a result, the city might struggle to address important mobility-related challenges, including traffic congestion, air pollution, and limited access to public transportation. The future of the plan remains uncertain until the political situation stabilises.