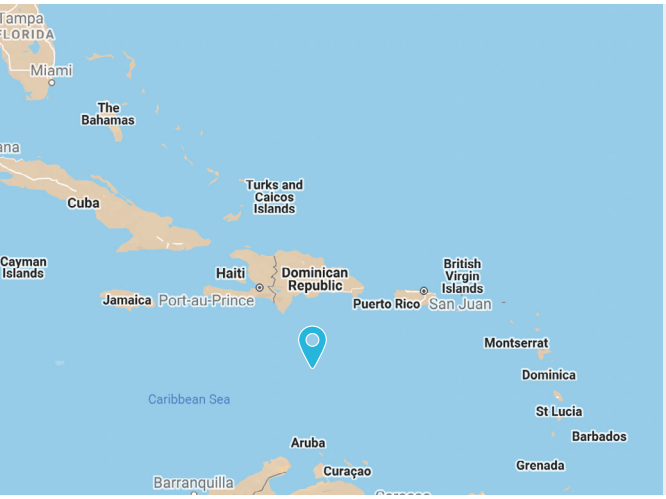
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Partner city

Status of the project: **Completed Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan & Ongoing implementation support**



Basic Information

Population: **3.66 Million**

Urban area: **1,300 km²**

Motorisation rate: **155.5 vehicles per 1,000 inhabitants**

Transport emissions per capita: **128 g CO_2eq**

GDP per capita: **USD 9,700**

Santo Domingo chose the most ambitious path amongst the scenarios identified for its urban mobility plan, which is primarily dedicated to developing a high-capacity public transport offer.

Critical mobility challenges	The SUMP in a nutshell **Selected SUMP Measures** Total plan: $ 2.6 billion for urban mobility, from which $1.25 billion is already financed	Projected SUMP impact in 2030
Only 10% of the population has access to formal public transport	**$ 1,8 billion** to build a public transport offer with over.	
The predominance of private cars and informal transport services	From which: • **$ 1 billion** to extend and improve the metro network • **$ 763 million** for BRT, tramway and buses • Improvement of attractivity, inclusivity and communication of public transport	• Annual greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by 20% in 2030 • Increase access to formal public transport from 10% to 43% of the population of Gran Santo Domingo • The increased modal share of all public transport combined from 36% to 44% • 110 km of mass rapid transit lines
	• **$ 656 million** for improved roads and streets • Modernisation policies for private and public transport vehicles	
Transport inequality: deplorable conditions of transport for users without a private car	• **$ 47 million** for non-motorised transport infrastructure and a green corridor along the river • **15 M€** for a bike-sharing system • **Social tariff policy**	• 150 km of new or improved cycle lanes • 150 km of new or enhanced sidewalk • Improved affordability of public transport
Wide variety of non-integrated transport services	• Integrated tariff policy	• The leading role of the **new transport authority INTRANT**

Support from the Partnership: mobility planning

Project description

Technical Assistance: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) Development

Funded by: EU INTRA ACP

Funding amount: 550,000 EUR

Implemented by: Agence Francaise de Développement (AFD)

Local counterpart: Instituto Nacional de Transport Terrestre (INTRANT)

Baseline motorisation rate[1]	155.5 vehicles per 1000 inhabitants
Annual transport emissions per capita[2]	128 g CO_2eq
SUMP Implementation timeline	Joined MobiliseYourCity in June 2017 MobiliseDays in October 2017 Start of SUMP in March 2018 SUMP was completed and approved in September 2019
SUMP Vision	Reach an integrated approach to improve access to sustainable mobility services and socioeconomic opportunities for all citizens by integrating urban and transport planning, enhancing sustainable transport modes, and strengthening local transport authorities' institutional, technical, and financial capacities.
Key expected results (GHG, modal share and access)	Compared to 2018, in a SUMP scenario, by 2030, Santo Domingo can expect to • Increase access to public transportation to 43% of Santo Domingo citizens from 10% • Increase total trips taken by public transport to 44% from 36% • Reduce GHG emissions by 30% compared to a business as usual (no SUMP)
Total SUMP Investment Requirement	USD 2.6 billion **Mass transit (CAPEX + OPEX - annual)** • 2018 (Baseline): 60 • 2023 (SUMP): 64 • 2025 (SUMP): 160 • 2030 (SUMP): 200

[1] For comparison with motorisation rates in European capital cities, Berlin has a motorisation rate of 330 car per 1000 inhabitants, and other capital cities in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland and the Netherlands have a motorisation rate under 450 cars per 1000 inhabitants. Source: Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2020.

[2] For comparison, the annual transport (except air travel) emissions per capita in Germany are 1.61 tC02eq. Source: Die Umweltwirtschaft in Deutschland: Entwicklung, Struktur und internationale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. www.umweltbundesamt.de

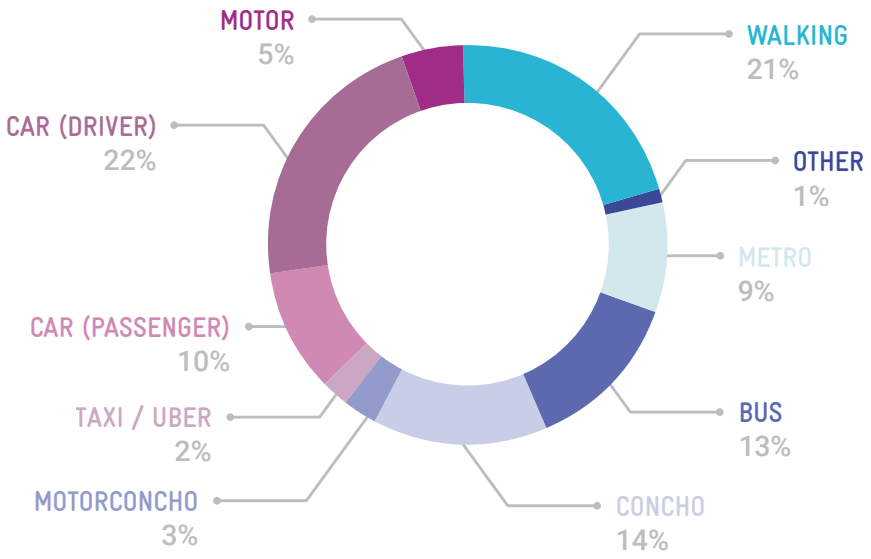
Diagnosis of urban mobility in Santo Domingo

1. Existing Mobility and transport services

Located in the Caribbean region, Santo Domingo is the administrative, economic, and political capital of the Dominican Republic. With a population estimated at more than 3.5 million inhabitants, representing one-third of the total country population, and a projection of 4 million in 2030, Santo Domingo is a dynamic, fast-growing city.

The current transportation system in the City of Santo Domingo has primarily resulted from historically unregulated, uneven, and rapid urbanisation. The results are vastly different service levels, socioeconomic activities, and quality of life across the city's municipalities. The starkest differences can be observed between the city centre – the 'National District' – and its periphery, mainly affected by the lack of public services, including formal public transport.

This development pathway has fostered a transport system mainly based on individual motorised transport, with little consideration for public spaces and pedestrians and a nearly complete disregard for cyclists. Motorisation rates range from 40 to 60 per cent, depending on the municipality. Additionally, the high urban density in the National District and the very narrow main roads in the peripheral cities heavily constrain the ability to expand public spaces and repurpose current roads for mass rapid transit services.

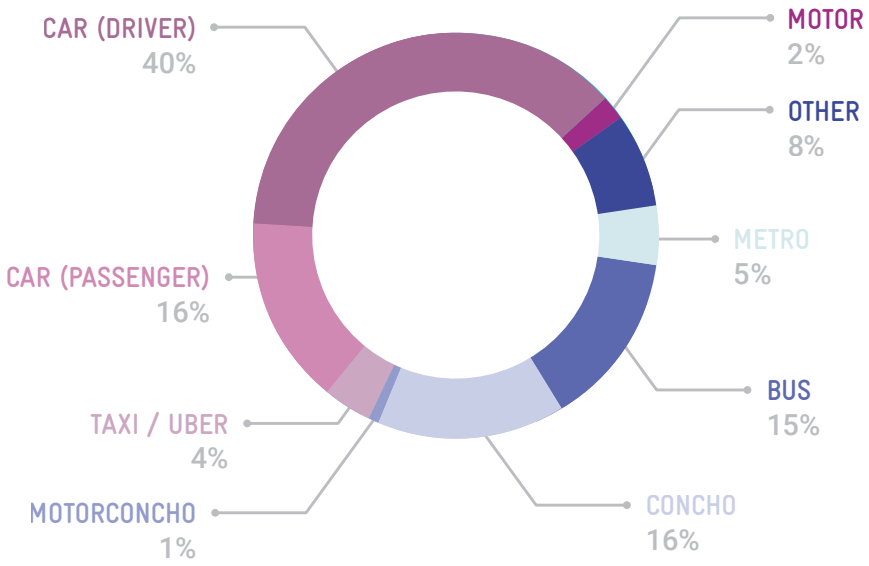


Graph 1. Modal share in Santo Domingo

Public transport in the city comprises various formal and informal services. The formal system includes two metro lines, one aerial tramway and 11 bus lines. The latter is serviced by a relatively small fleet of 160 buses operated by a state-owned bus company. 3,000 mini- and microbuses and 16,000 informal taxis (so-called 'conchos') constitute the informal services that run along 84 and 114 fixed lines, respectively. These numbers reveal the predominance of informal over formal transport: 14% of total trips are made by conchos, 13% by buses and 9% by metro.

2. Social, environmental, and economic aspects.

The prevalence of informal transport and high motorisation rates means mobility is highly fragmented and atomised. This situation not only results in high congestion and long commuting times (>1 hour/day). Informal transport services are also characterised as being uncomfortable and insecure. Cheaper fares partly compensate for the inferior quality of service. However, because fare policy lies in the hands of informal transport associations, they may abuse this power to set fares at unreasonably high levels. Self-regulation has also resulted in low-quality standards regarding a deteriorating vehicle fleet (75% of the vehicles are over 15 years old) and under-qualified drivers. These factors contribute to high traffic accidents, air pollution and GHG emissions. Consequently, informal taxis and private cars account for the highest share of the sector's GHG emissions, accounting for 16% and 56% of total emissions, respectively.



Graph 2. GHG emissions by transport mode

Gender heavily influences mobility. On average, men make 0.5 more trips than women a day. This pattern is explained partly by the fact that 40% of men are employed, whereas only 26% of women have a full-time job, and the other 25% stay home.

3. Institutional and financial situation

Until the passing of Law 63-17 in 2017, the institutional landscape was equally characterised by a high degree of fragmentation and low regulatory and enforcement capacities of public authorities, allowing for the mostly unregulated development of public transport in Santo Domingo.

Since 2017, INTRANT has become the national road transport authority to centralise all regulatory and decision-making competencies regarding public transport. Among its central tasks, INTRANT is responsible for regulating and formalising public transport, establishing minimum service and quality standards for licences, centralising fare policy and promoting the corporatisation of informal operators. Informal transport operators should participate in the integrated public transport system currently under development.

Although the creation of INTRANT, the financial landscape is still fragmented at the national level across various ministries and very limited at the municipal level, which makes the latter dependent on the former. It is expected that INTRANT will help channel, manage, and leverage financial resources and improve coordination among central stakeholders.

The SUMP preparation process and stakeholder involvement

Several participatory formats were selected for stakeholder involvement.

- Steering committee to communicate the progress of the SUMP, discuss and decide on political decisions.
- Bilateral meetings to present and discuss technical and political decisions with municipalities and ministries.
- Focal groups will work on topics selected by INTRANT (public space with neighbourhood committees; school transport with educational institutions and parents).
- Face-to-face interviews and working tables to enhance knowledge of specific sectors (logistics) or geographic areas (municipalities).

Vision and goals

Strategic Vision: An integrated approach to improve access to sustainable mobility services and socioeconomic opportunities for all citizens by integrating urban and transport planning, enhancing sustainable transport modes, and strengthening institutional, technical, and financial capacities of local transport authorities

SUMP Goals and targets

- Develop a comprehensive and integrated transport network that responds to the different realities of the constituting municipalities and the increasing demand for mobility.
- Guarantee equal access to the population and (re-)establish connectivity in areas affected by natural and infrastructural barriers.
- Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport (collective and active), and enhance the public transport network, improve and expand walking and cycling infrastructure and integrate urban and transport planning
- Align and strengthen institutional, technical, and financial conditions for the implementation of a sustainable mobility system

Test scenarios and selected scenario

Three specific scenarios were defined to assess the impact of the SUMP; each one developed with a different level of ambition.

- Baseline scenario: no SUMP implementation occurs, but existing laws and regulations are implemented. These include organising and regulating the public transport network, enhancing the metro and aerial tramway systems, and developing a vehicle modernisation program for buses and informal services.
- Central scenario: this scenario builds on the baseline but assumes additional measures are implemented, such as enhancing road infrastructure, integrating transport modes, increasing accessibility, creating an investment fund for public transport, and achieving 100% modernisation of the current fleet.
- Ambitious scenario: this scenario includes additional milestones by factoring in the establishment of a robust financial system with a wide variety of financing sources and instruments (incl. congestion charging and property tax), the inclusion of transport demand management measures, promotion of active and collective transport modes, and the creation of additional incentives to companies and individuals to shift to sustainable transport modes.

INTRANT selected the ambitious scenario as the basis for the following definition and selection of measures. The selected measures and the expected impacts of the ambitious scenario are presented in the following sections.

The city of Santo Domingo has opted for the ambitious scenario.

Key SUMP measures

Measures	Cost estimates (million USD)	Proposed Financing Source	Implementation schedule (year)
Physical (Infrastructure, rolling stock, etc.)			
Metro Lines 1 & 2: Increase passenger capacity	480	OPRET[3], donors (AFD)	2019-2024
Metro Line 2: Line extension	564	MOPC[4], donors	2025-2030
Construction of 5 BRT or LRT corridors	603	MOPC, donors	2021-2025
Construction of 4 aerial tramway lines	159	MOPC, donors	2021-2030
Creation of 5 express busway lines	1,51	MOPC, donors	2019-2030
Infrastructural improvement of inter-municipal networks	606	MOPC	Until 2025
Infrastructural improvement of internal municipal networks	50	MOPC	Until 2023
Improvement and expansion of sidewalks and cycling lanes	42	MOPC, municipalities	Until 2023
Integration of public transport modes	0,3	INTRANT	Until 2020
Implement a public bike-sharing system	15	MOPC, municipalities	Until 2030
Develop a 'green' corridor along the river basin	5	Municipalities, MOPC	Until 2025
Provide parking areas in port zones	0,3	AUPORDOM	Until 2023
Technical (studies, plans, designs, etc.)			
Design of secondary (complementary) bus network	0,3	INTRANT	2029-2030
Study on school transport services	0,3	INTRANT	2021-2023
Studies on improvement of transport demand management	1	INTRANT	2021-2023
Improve access to persons with disabilities	0,6	INTRANT, MOPC, municipalities, operators	Until 2023
Improve the image and attractiveness of the bus system	20	Municipalities, MOPC, operators	Until 2023
Improve communications of public transport services for users	0,6	INTRANT, donors	Until 2023
Integrate city-port interface management in national and local planning	0,3	AUPORDOM[5]	Until 2025
Implement merchandise delivery and pick-up plan in the port areas	0,3	AUPORDOM	Until 2023
Studies to support urban and transport planning integration	0,6	INTRANT, municipalities	Until 2025
Policy & regulation			
Integrated tariff policy	0,6	INTRANT, operators, government	Until 2025
Social tariff policy	0,6	INTRANT, operators, government	Until 2025
Transport demand management policy	0,6	INTRANT	Until 2023
Private vehicle fleet modernisation policy	0,3	INTRANT, Ministry of Finance	Until 2023
Bus fleet modernisation policy		operators	Until 2023
Parking policy	0,6	INTRANT, municipalities, MOPC	Until 2030
Regulation of HDV transit	0,3	INTRANT	Until 2023
Total cost	**2.556,11**		

[3] National transport planning authority (Oficina para el Reordenamiento del Transporte)

[4] Ministry of public works and communications

[5] National port authority

Expected results and impact

Impact Area	Expected Impact
GHG emission (SDG 11)	Yearly reduction of GHG emissions relative to 2018 (baseline year) • 2023: -4% • 2025: -7% • 2030: - 20%
Accessibility (SDG 11)	Percentage of the total population with access to public transport • 2018 (baseline): 10% • 2023: 25% • 2025: 36% • 2030: 43%
Air pollution (SDG 11)	Not quantified
Modal share	Percentage of total trips made by Public Transport • 2018 (baseline): 36% • 2023: 39% • 2025: 41% • 2030: 44%
Road safety (SDG 3)	Not quantified
Mobilised finance (SDG 17)	Leveraged international finance • EU-CIF: 10 m€ (secured until 2023) Associated international and domestic investments • AFD: 436 m€ (planned, until 2030) • Domestic finance and AFD: 245 m€ (secured loan) • Domestic finance and AFD: 590 m€ (planned loan)
Infrastructure and assets with committed financing (SDG 9)	New roads to be built by 2030 • KM of sidewalks: 150 km • KM of cycle lanes: 150 km • KM of mass rapid transit lines: 109,3 km
Expected institutional impact	The recently created road transport authority, INTRANT, will reduce institutional fragmentation by centralising regulatory and planning functions. This will improve cooperation between the sector's strategic, tactical, and operational levels. The leading role of INTRANT in the development and implementation of the SUMP will help channel and leverage additional financial resources from private, public and international stakeholders for the implementation phase. Not only is the new institutional arrangement in the sector a necessary step for building capacity and rationalising authority, but the SUMP process also offers a great learning opportunity.

SUMP finance leverage

Leveraged financing (resulting or enabled by the SUMP preparation process)

Description	Source of financing	Secured	Amount
Assitance to support SUMP implementation	EU CIF	Secured	10 M EUR
Assitance to support SUMP implementation	AFD	Secured	0.4 M EUR
Sustainable Urban mobility programme for the Dominican Republic (2025-2029)	EU-LACIF	Secured	10 M EUR

Associated financing

Description	Source of financing	Secured	Amount
New Metro Line 3	AFD	Planned	
Metro Line 2 Capacity increase project (2025-2029)	AFD	Secured	178.62 M EUR
Metro Line 2 Extension (L2C)	BCIE	Secured	250 M EUR
Metro Line 1 Capacity increase project (2020-2026)	AFD	Secured	220 M EUR
Cable Car Line 2 (2019-2023)	Domestic finance	Secured	105 M EUR

Insights from practice: Lessons learned from the SUMP development process

The importance of a leading transport authority

Creating a state-level transport authority opens a new perspective for urban mobility governance and management. The recently created road transport authority, INTRANT, will reduce institutional fragmentation by centralising regulatory and planning functions, improving cooperation between the sector's strategic, tactical, and operational levels.

The leading role of INTRANT in the development and implementation of the SUMP will help channel and leverage additional financial resources from private, public, and international stakeholders for the implementation phase. Not only is the new institutional arrangement in the sector a necessary step for building capacity and rationalising authority, but the SUMP process offers a great learning opportunity.

A radical change in priorities

Santo Domingo's SUMP may serve as a reminder of an indisputable fact: a sustainable, attractive, accessible, and safe transport system can only be realised by an enabling physical infrastructure that prioritises public and active transport. The city's SUMP is an example of transport planning done right. As the saying goes, "if you plan for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places".

Support from the Partnership: Implementation support

Project description

Technical Assistance: Assistance for the Implementation of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan - AIPMUS Santo Domingo

Funded by: EU (through the Caribbean Investment Facility)

Funding amount: 10,000,000 Implemented by: AFD

Local counterpart & SUMP Implementation agency: INTRANT.

Supported activities:

- Strengthening service capacity related to the National Urban Mobility Plan in the Dominican Republic, focusing on non-motorised transport, public transit, smart mobility, and institutional strengthening.
- Implementing the SUMP in Gran Santo Domingo, including pre- or feasibility studies and pilot projects.

The EU supports technical assistance to INTRANT for four years to contribute to implementing SUMP actions, overseeing contract execution, and reinforcing technical capacities. The aim is to help the city transition from the SUMP planning process to the implementation phase. The AISUMP defines concrete short-term actions to advance implementation, complementing the general vision outlined in the SUMP. Key early projects in Santo Domingo include transforming the public transport system, deploying electric mobility, promoting active mobility, managing traffic, and urban logistics. Eighteen high-priority projects for the first year of technical assistance have been proposed, with fifteen additional studies or pilot projects to be considered later.

While the SUMP provides a general overview of the city's urban mobility vision, the AIPMUS defines concrete actions in the short term to advance implementation. Implementation mainly involves transitioning from SUMP measures to project preparation. In Santo Domingo's case, early SUMP projects include transforming the public transport system, electromobility deployment, active mobility promotion, traffic management and urban logistics. So far, 26 projects have been identified as high-priority , of which nine have been completely finalised, five are ongoing, and 13 are upcoming. The prioritisation was done based on dialogue among different public authorities.

Status of the project execution:

The project had two execution phases, one between the 2021 and 2024 kick-off and a second phase between 2024 and 2026.

First phase – Kicking off implementation (2021-2024): This phase focused on activities related to planning the public transport network, capacity building and institutional strengthening, and transport modelling. In this first phase, guidelines to design cycling infrastructure were launched, and a study was conducted to identify the best fare model for Santo Domingo. Lastly, a new transport model was developed to support decision-making, assess scenarios and quantify the impacts of transport interventions.

Second phase – technical studies and infrastructure design (2024-2026): This phase includes more detailed studies for project preparation. Integrated public transport system and paratransit sector

AFD is supporting the project preparation for the Metropolitan Train and studies for the conceptual design for a BRT project, including an e-BRT corridor. The project also supports implementing the fare policy chosen in both Gran Santo Domingo and Santiago de los Caballeros. The studies to structure the intercity terminal are ongoing, including technical, legal, and financial aspects. This intermodal hub is expected to have a connection point between the cable car system, the metro, and intercity buses.

Moreover, some '*conchos*' unions have started the formalisation process by creating bus companies. 900 of these conchos have been replaced by 141 buses in the three intervened corridor in Santo Domingo as of 2024.

The transformation of the city's paratransit sector includes increasing the operational and organisational capacities of former concho unions, and defining the role of INTRANT in managing institutional relationships with the recently formed bus operators. The AIPMUS project also supports a study to explore '*motoconchos*'[6] Integration with the overall public transport network and identification of the most suitable corridors for operation as a last-mile solution.

AFD supports INTRANT in formalising individual conchos operators in identified corridors.

Electromobility

As the Dominican Republic has experienced growth in electric vehicle use, momentum to engage private companies in the further deployment of electromobility is in place in Gran Santo Domingo. In 2020, city officials visited Bogota to see its experience in the sector, especially regarding public transport. INTRANT is working on “Avenida Ecológica” - a bus priority corridor – which is expected to operate with electric buses. The AIMPUS project supports the development of the TORs for the project including infrastructure design and operational model. The rolling stock purchase will be done later during the feasibility phase. , bus service “ecological corridor”.

[6] Popular name for moto-taxis in Santo Domingo

Active mobility

Especially in the 'National District', where most of the economic activities and the historical centre are located, there is an intention from the local government to strengthen the use of active modes.

- Cycle lanes: 10 km of cycling lanes have been built, which inspired the production of national cycling-lanes implementation guidelines (already published and adopted). The cycle lanes in the Distrito Nacional are expected to be revitalised. The project supports the implementation of an 'Alameda' in Santiago de Los Caballeros, connecting relevant corridors with the central station, the monorail, and the cable car[7] .
- Bike sharing system: Initiatives such as the bike-sharing system leverage the interaction between mobility and economic development. The bikesharing system was designed byAC&A[8]. In the framework of Euroclima's new phase, FIAPP is interested in continuing to support the bike-sharing system.
- Pilots: Some pilots have been developed to provide bike lanes, as well as the development of guidelines on complete streets.

Traffic management and urban logistics

Traffic officers are trained in good practices regarding traffic management and law enforcement that are aligned with the new law on urban mobility. The Santo Domingo Road Plan was finalised. The development of the Traffic plan is ongoing, including a model specifically for traffic analysis. A round table of urban logistics has been implemented with relevant stakeholders.

Data collection and digitalisation

The AIPMUS Project will support updating the Gran Santo Domingo Mobility household survey, whose last edition was carried out more than 5 years ago. An information system to support public transport operation is under design, and a wayfinding and user app to facilitate data availability and flux is expected to be supported.

Main SUMP implementation challenges

Impact and risk analysis – environmental assessment and donor requirements, but not a systematic practice in the Dominican Republic.

INTRANT faces significant capacity constraints in implementing the SUMP due to limited staff and a shortage of locally trained urban mobility experts.The recently established INTRANT struggles to meet the demands of the extensive list of urban mobility projects proposed in the SUMP. While the staff is highly knowledgeable, their numbers remain insufficient for the city's needs. Additionally, experts in urban mobility trained within the Dominican Republic are scarce. Local universities offer limited programmes in urban transport planning, resulting in a shortage of locally trained professionals. As a result, most INTRANT staff have gained their expertise abroad, which can make it difficult to address context-specific challenges related to the prioritised projects. To successfully implement the SUMP, aligning the team's values with the SUMP proposals and fostering a paradigm shift in urban mobility planning is essential.

Financial resources for SUMP implementation are not guaranteed, as budgets are allocated nationally.

Urban mobility projects must compete for funding against other sectors. However, a key advantage is that urban transport is one of the few sectors with the potential to generate revenue—through fares, on-road parking fees, and fines. These earnings could be reinvested into SUMP initiatives, providing a potential financial sustainability mechanism. Up until now, these revenues are not in place.

[7] Public transport services in Santo Domingo include metro, metropolitan train, and cable car, whereas in Santiago de los Caballeros, existing public transport services include metro and cable car.

[8] https://despacio.org/portfolio/egis-aipmus-rpdom/

Political commitment is essential to advancing sustainable urban mobility projects in Santo Domingo.

Many interventions face resistance because they challenge the status quo and the traditional allocation of street space. For example, opposition to repurposing car lanes for cycling infrastructure is standard, as the number of urban cyclists remains low. To address these challenges, decision-makers need training and awareness of the sustainable mobility paradigm. Civil society support and international funding are crucial in keeping the topic on the political agenda. Rather than imposing changes, fostering participation, engagement, and awareness can help demonstrate the benefits of sustainable mobility solutions.

Effective SUMP implementation requires continuous multi-level and inter-institutional coordination.

Effective multi-level and inter-institutional coordination is crucial for implementing SUMP projects. A continuous flow of information and collaboration between national and local authorities and institutions is needed to define responsibilities clearly. Many projects require national approval but rely on local regulation, making seamless coordination essential. The newly established Fideicomiso para el Transporte Masivo is mandated to promote mass transit projects, yet raising awareness of SUMP measures remains challenging. Creating opportunities for exchange can enhance coordination, improve governance, and ensure successful implementation.

Takeaways on SUMP implementation support

INTRANT's growing technical capacity

INTRANT has strengthened its technical expertise throughout the SUMP implementation, allowing it to lead project development with minimal external consulting. While some specialised support is still needed, the institution is increasingly capable of managing urban mobility projects or is on its path to empowering more to manage the projects.

Early stages of SUMP implementation remain in mere studies

The advantage of the current AIPMUS portfolio is that most projects focus on studies, which are easier to execute. However, translating these studies into on-the-ground implementation remains a challenge. There is a risk that projects do not materialise into tangible improvements, emphasising the need for strong political will and strategic follow-up.

Highlights from last year

Through the Latin American and Caribbean Investment Facility, the EU has recently approved 10 M EUR for further support of SUMP implementation in Santo Domingo. AFD designed the project with the support of CODATU and Expertise France.

There is interest in supporting the implementation of Santo Domingo's bike-sharing system under the Global Gateway program in Latin America (formerly Euroclima). The AIPMUS project has provided an update on its progress to ensure that FIIAP[9] can take over the project without duplicating previous efforts.

Updated in December 2024

[9] FIIAP is the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies – a Spanish development agency and implementing partner of the Global Gateway investments in Latin America https://www.fiiapp.org/en/