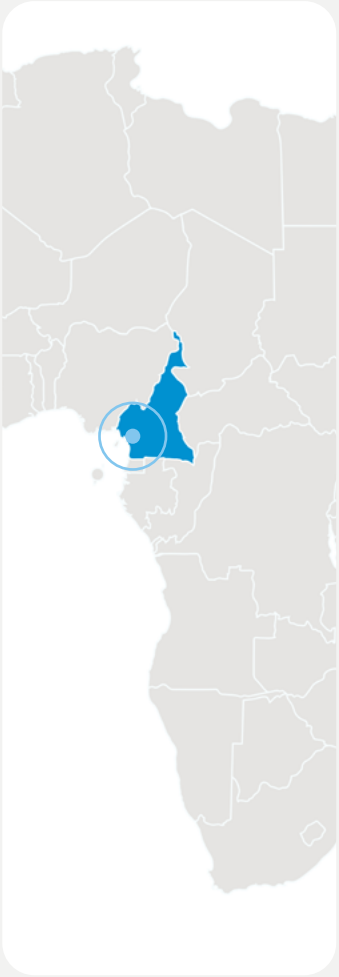
Douala, Cameroon

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan — Completed

Basic information

Urban area	→	923 km²
Population	→	3,663,227
Growth rate	→	3.6%
Regional capital city		
GDP per capita	→	USD 2,952
Baseline motorisation rate	→	≈20 automobiles / 1,000 inhab.
Modal share		
Minibuses (paratransit)	→	1%
Walking	→	35%
Private cars	→	5%
Private motorbikes or 2-wheelers	→	4%
Taxis (paratransit)	→	12%
Moto taxis (paratransit)	→	40%
Other	→	3%
National GHG emissions per capita	→	0.4 (tCO2eq)
Exposure to climate change	→	HIGH



Context

The port city of Douala, Cameroon's central economic hub, lies on a low coastal plateau with numerous natural drainage channels and flood-prone valleys. With a population of more than 4 million, projected to reach 5 million by 2030[1], Douala is a dynamic, fast-growing city. Douala's rapid growth is particularly pronounced on the outskirts, where access to formal public transport services is low or non-existent. Urban sprawl forces people to travel farther to access jobs, markets, health care, and education. The low quality and inadequacy of infrastructure for walking and cycling add to the low provision of public transport services.

This combination of factors pushes travellers to rely on informal motorcycle taxis and mini-bus services instead of more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and higher-capacity public transport. Informal transport services have taken an increasingly large modal share in outlying

[1] https://worldpopulationreview.com/cities/cameroon/douala

areas and in the city centre. This entails threats to the citizens' health, safety, and comfort, as the precariousness of working conditions and high competitiveness of paratransit services are associated with a higher risk of traffic accidents and sexual harassment toward women. Ageing or badly maintained vehicles also significantly increase air and water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Regulating and supervising urban development are significant challenges for public authorities, as a large percentage of urban territory is subject to unsanctioned land use, which is associated with the isolation of working-class neighbourhoods, the lack of tertiary roads, the saturation of industrial zones, and the growth of informal settlements on often unsuitable land.

In addition, the lack of dialogue between land-use planning and mobility planning authorities exacerbates the urban transport problem. Above all, creating the conditions for viable integration between urban and transport planning is necessary. This diagnosis has led to the recognition of the need to adopt a more operational planning approach than previously used to respond to the challenges posed by the rapid development of metropolitan areas.

Support from the Partnership

Technical Assistance: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)
Founded by: European Commission and Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)
Funding amount: EUR 400,000
Implemented by: Agence Française de Développement (AFD) through the MobiliseYourCity Africa Program
Local counterpart: Urban Community of Douala
Consultant(s) involved: SYSTRA
Project start date: 2018 Q1
SUMP completion date: 2019 Q3
Final SUMP report: No public SUMP report available

Supported activities:

- Organisation of Mobilise Days, in conjunction with Yaoundé, to officially launch SUMP development and raise awareness.
- Preparation of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan for Douala, with three main objectives:

  → Enhancing citizens' access to destinations, activities and services offered in Douala;

  → Enhancing the urban environment in Douala;

  → Renewing the governance of Douala, its mobility, and projects

Completed outputs:

- Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

  → Diagnosis

  → Vision and goals

  → Action and financing plan

SUMP key measures and cost estimates

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

Measures	Cost estimates (EUR)	Proposed financing source	Implementation by
Physical investments (infrastructure, rolling stock, etc.)	547,000,000		
Road infrastructure projects	107,000,000	Domestic financing	2021
Purchase of 283 Bus 12m 2021: 150 2024: 133	66,000,000 2021: 33,000,000 2024: 33,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2021 2024
Bus facilities (stations)	24,000,000 2021: 4,000,000 2024: 20,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2021 2024
Purchase of 164 BRT 18m 2021: 50 2024: 75 2029: 39	66,000,000 2021: 20,000,000 2024: 30,000,000 2029: 16,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2021 2024 2029
BRT facilities (stations)	92,000,000 2021: 18,000,000 2024: 49,000,000 2029: 25,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2021 2024 2029
Cable Car line	26,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2024
Development of 5 major multimodal interchange centres and 15 transfer points	15,000,000 2021: 4,000,000 2024: 6,000,000 2029: 5,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2021 2024 2029
Walking plan	15,000,000 2021: 3,000,000 2024: 7,000,000 2029: 5,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2021 2024 2029
Investments for cycling	5,000,000 2024: 1,000,000 2029: 4,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2024 2029
Reinforcement of the river links to Manuka	4,000,000	Domestic financing	2021
Development of river and rail transport infrastructure	5,000,000	Domestic financing	2029
Centralised Control Centre	10,000,000 2021: 3,000,000 2024: 4,000,000 2029: 3,000,000	World Bank & Domestic Financing	2021 2024 2029
Project management, call for interest and contingency provision	63,000,000 2021: 15,000,000 2024: 37,000,000 2029: 11,000,000	Domestic financing	2021 2024 2029
Development of logistical hubs and truck parking spaces	11,000,000 2024: 7,000,000 2029: 4,000,000	Domestic financing	2024 2029
Complementary actions and policy reforms in three phases	38,000,000 2021: 10,000,000 2024: 10,000,000 2029: 38,000,000		
Technical (studies, plans, designs, etc.)			
Short-term complementary studies and strategy setting			2021
Guidelines for logistics platforms and truck parking			2021

Measures	Cost estimates (EUR)	Proposed financing source	Implementation by
Concerted plans and strategies for • upkeep and maintenance of the road network • valorisation/distribution of the public space • Tariff and ticketing of public transport			2021
Integration of mobility and other urban networks (water, sewage, energy, waste)			2024
Municipal traffic and parking plans			2024
Anticipation of plans after the SUMP			2029
Policy & regulation			
Informal transport project Continuous formalisation of motorcycle taxis and informal buses through establishing a new institution responsible for vocational training, schedule regulation, and administrative formalisation.		European Union	2024
Implementation of a digital action plan • Open data policy • Support the development of information and service platforms • Mobility Observatory			2024
Strengthening the capacity of police officers in mobility			2024
Adaptation of public transport services and recruitment policy to tackle gender-related issues			2024
Improved road upkeep and maintenance			2024
Improved road signage			2024
Creation of a transport organising authority		European Union	2029
Monitoring and reporting on air quality and water pollution			2029
Emergence of new public transport operators			2029
Public support for the adoption of clean vehicles through financial incentives			2029
Optimised integration of port activities and reconversion of industrial disused sites			2029

The following table summarises the total capital expenditure (CapEx) estimates for different measures in the SUMP.

Urban transport investment measures	Capex estimate (EUR)
Public transport and NMT	328,000,000
Street shaping urban roads and traffic management	107,000,000
Other measures	74,000,000
Total	509,000,000

Projected impacts

Indicator	Impact 2030 (SUMP vs BAU)	Baseline - 2019	Projected 2030 BAU	Projected 2030 SUMP scenario
Total annual GHG emissions (Mt CO2eq)	-0,19 Mt CO2eq -20 %	0.548 Mt CO2eq	0.95 Mt CO2eq	0.76 Mt CO2eq
Annual transport-related GHG emissions per capita (kg CO2eq)	-36 kg CO2eq / capita -20.7 %	161 kg CO2eq/ capita	174 kg CO2eq/ capita	138 kg CO2eq/ capita
Access Increase the proportion of the population living within 500 meters or less of a public transport stop.	Improved but not quantified	Not quantified	Not quantified	Not quantified
Air pollution Decrease in mean urban air pollution of particulate matter (in µg PM2.5) at road-based monitoring stations.	Improved but not quantified	Not quantified	Not quantified	Not quantified
Modal share Increase in the modal shares of trips by public transport, walking and cycling	Formal public transport : +5% Informal public transport: 0% Walking : +6% Cycling : 0% **TOTAL : +6%**	Formal public transport : 2% Informal public transport: 1% Walking : 35% Cycling : 0% **TOTAL : 38%**	Formal public transport : 1% Informal public transport: 0% Walking : 34% Cycling : 0% **TOTAL : 35%**	Formal public transport : 6% Informal public transport: 0% Walking : 40% Cycling : 0% **TOTAL : 46%**
Road safety Decrease in traffic fatalities in the urban area per 100,000 inhabitants	Improved but not quantified	Not quantified	Not quantified	Not quantified

Finance leverage

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

Description	Source of financing	Type	Status	Amount (EUR)
Implementation of SUMP soft measures	European Union	Grant	Secured	2,000,000

Associated financing

Description	Source of financing	Type	Status	Amount (EUR)
Douala BRT and other investments	World Bank	Loan	Secured	400,000,000
Domestic contribution to the BRT and other investments	Government of Cameroon	Budget allocation	Secured	50,000,000
Private investment in the BRT project	Public-Private Partnership	Equity	Secured	19,000,000

Perspectives for implementation

The Douala Urban Mobility Project (PMUD) aims to implement BRT and improve moto-taxi services in Douala.

The Douala Urban Municipality (CUD) will implement two of the main measures of the SUMP adopted in 2019 through the Douala Urban Mobility Project (PMUD), signed in August 2024 between the State of Cameroon and the World Bank. The main objective of this project is to improve urban mobility by implementing a pilot BRT corridor in Douala, and to support economic and inclusive development along the BRT and feeder lines. The project will also help improve governance in the sector, strengthen stakeholders' roles in urban mobility, and improve the service and working conditions of moto-taxis in Douala. Douala's BRT will be based on Dakar's experience[2].

The planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Douala is being developed with a view toward adapting the Senegalese BRT model used in Dakar. As part of this effort, a delegation from Douala led by Cameroon's Minister of Habitat and Urban Development conducted a benchmarking mission to Dakar in February 2025 to study the implementation, operations, and institutional arrangements of the Dakar BRT. During the visit, the delegation met with Senegalese counterparts, toured key infrastructure and stations, and exchanged technical insights to inform the design of Douala's own system. This approach reflects a deliberate effort by Cameroonian authorities to learn from Dakar's experience and best practices to tailor a BRT solution that can effectively address Douala's urban mobility challenges and support a more efficient, sustainable public transport network.

[2] https://citieshebdo.com/2025/03/05/cooperation-sous-regionale-douala-sinspire-du-modele-senegalais-de-bus-rapid-transit-pour-revolutionner-sa-mobilite-urbaine

Insights from practice: lessons learned from the SUMP process

The Douala Urban Mobility Project (PMUD) aims to implement BRT and improve moto-taxi services in Douala.

It links mobility and urban planning, incorporates existing actors and transport modes, and proposes innovative solutions beyond road infrastructure, such as constructing a cable car line.

The SUMP's Action, Financing and Governance Plan is fully fundable from existing financial resources, newly identified resources, and international finance. It is based on a transport investment plan from the previous decade, with additional revenue from higher fuel taxes, car ownership, and parking. Funding is sourced from the public budget, resulting in a positive revenue-to-expenditure ratio for the operation of the public transport network. The SUMP is also tailored to the area's context, location, and specificities, ensuring a progressive and realistic implementation of the plan.

The Douala SUMP is inclusive, facilitating information workshops and thematic focus groups that include young people, women, and actors from both modern and informal private sectors. This participatory process identifies overlooked issues affecting population groups and devises appropriate solutions. Notably, these public and stakeholder consultations mobilised new actors to organise a car-free day.

Significant governance and institutional reforms are prerequisites to SUMP implementation.

Although the Douala Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) has strengths and opportunities, structural and urban limitations remain. The liberalisation of the economy and decentralisation have led to a proliferation of actors with diverse interests, sometimes in conflict with existing laws and regulations, complicating the organisation of the transport sector.

The management of regulatory urban planning poses a significant challenge in Douala and other African cities of similar size, given the creation of new districts on the outskirts, which necessitate new infrastructure and improvements in urban transportation. However, given the city's current investment and management capacity, these may not be sustainable.

Additionally, mobility data is often outdated and unavailable in a format suitable for long-term urban planning. Institutional reforms are necessary, including establishing a Transport Organising Authority, an Urban Planning Agency, and a Mobility Observatory to improve coordination between urban planning and mobility. These institutions should prioritise the representation of women and consider vulnerable groups, such as children and older people, who face systemic mobility challenges, such as safety and lack of suitable infrastructure, as identified by the diagnostic.

Highlights from the past year

Communication campaigns on the BRT construction have kicked off

The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Douala is entering a new phase of its implementation. On September 11, 2025, the city's mayor, Roger Mbassa Ndine, officially launched the community awareness campaign in the presence of the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Célestine Ketcha Courtès[3].

Last updated December 2025

[3] https://www.investiraucameroun.com/gestion-publique/1209-22442-bus-rapid-transit-a-douala-lancement-de-la-sensibilisation-communautaire-avant-les-travaux-annonces-pour-2026