

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROMOTING ACTIVE MOBILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION IN AFRICAN CITIES

DRAWN FROM THE LESSONS LEARNT DURING THE
6 “MOBILISEYOURCITY” SUSTAINABLE URBAN
MOBILITY PLANS IN DAKAR, DOUALA, YAOUNDÉ,
DIRE DAWA, BOUAKÉ AND ANTANANARIVO



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African cities are experiencing rapid urbanisation and sustained demographic growth. These transformations are resulting in a sharp increase in travel, generating congestion, unsafe roads and pollution.

Urban mobility systems need to be improved to address these challenges.

The 6 recommendations presented in this document

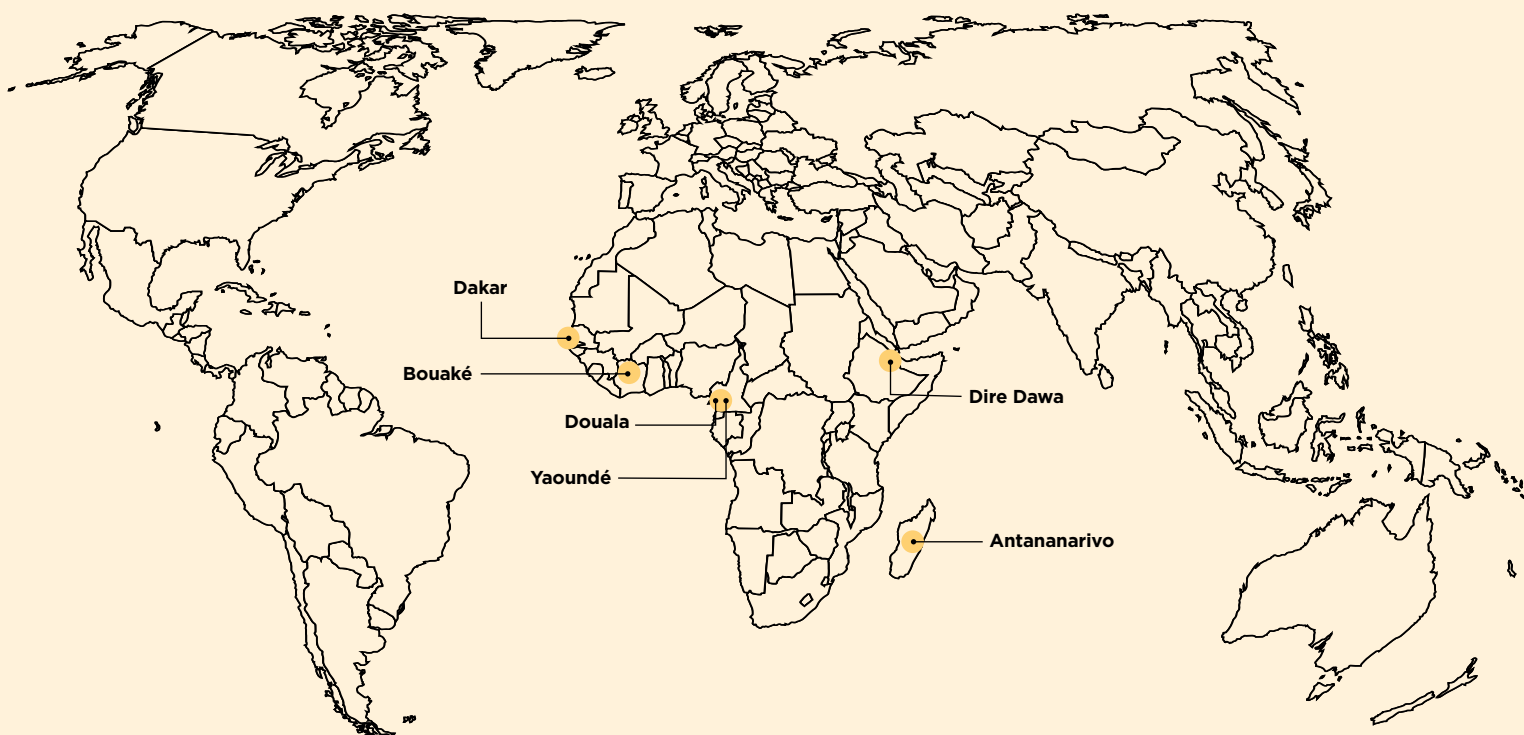
- > Consider developing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) as a process rather than a study
- > Consolidate ownership and leadership of the Project Management authority
- > Ensure that decision-makers hear citizens' voices
- > Put pedestrians at the heart of public space
- > Develop peaceful green corridors in cities: an opportunity to promote non-motorised mobility and climate action
- > Mobilise and optimise financing by maximising social and climate impact

CONTEXT

With support from the FFEM, several African cities have developed their SUMP (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan) through the MobiliseYourCity¹ partnership.

To develop and sustain this strategic framework, African cities face several constraints: weak governance, lack of strategic political steering, limited financing capacities, shortage of human resources and an absence of SUMP monitoring.

The lessons learned from the implementation of the six SUMPs in Doula, Yaoundé, Dakar, Bouaké, Dire Dawa and Antananarivo have made it possible to identify 6 recommendations to facilitate the operational implementation of SUMP measures, particularly those related to “non-motorised mobility” and “climate change mitigation”.



¹ The MobiliseYourCity Partnership is a major international initiative launched at COP21 in Paris to promote sustainable urban mobility planning, policy development and increased investment in sustainable transport in emerging and developing economies.

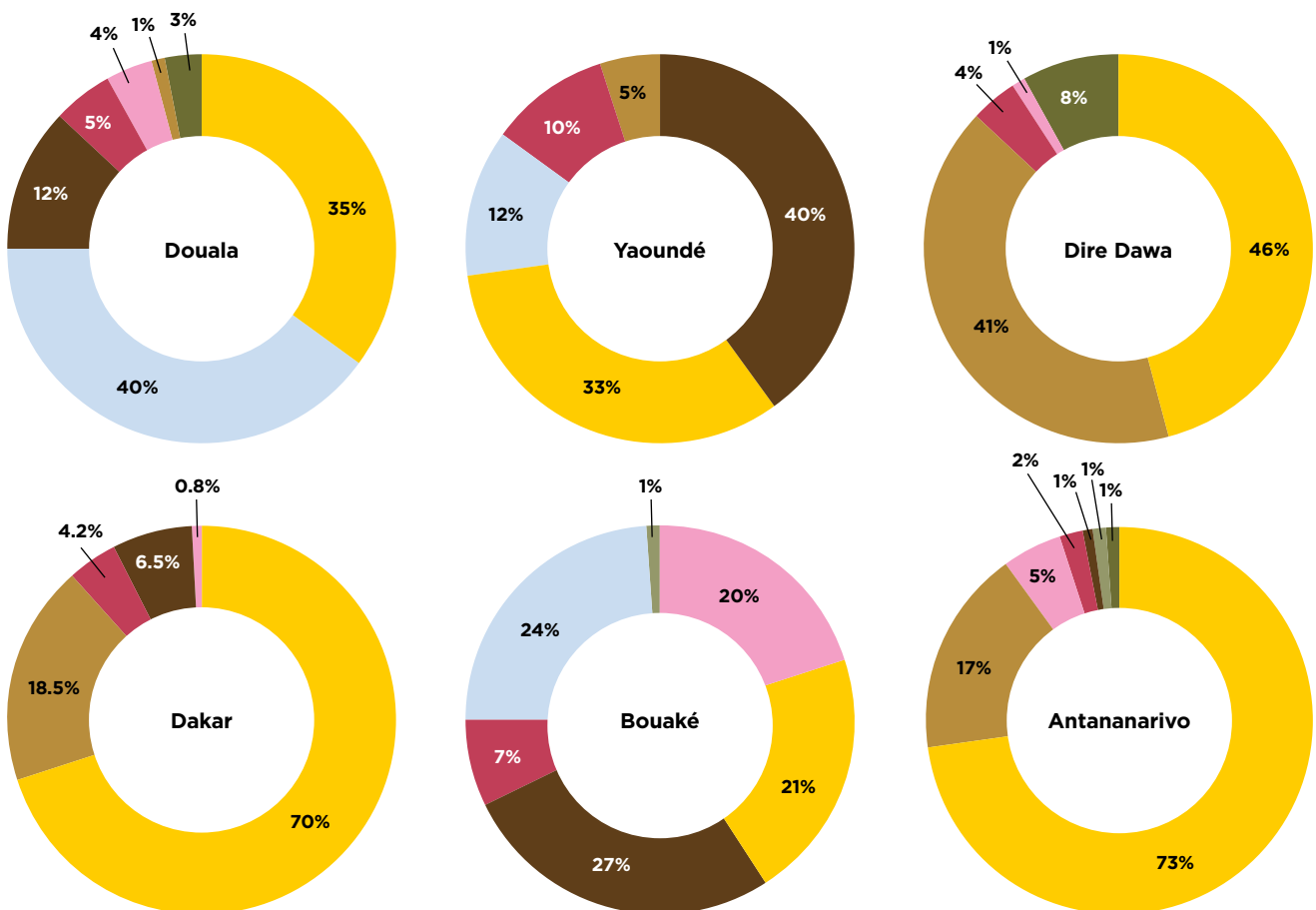
Consider developing a SUMP as a process rather than a study

Focusing discussions on a political vision of the city when developing the SUMP is key to facilitating its implementation. However, the Project Management authority may have very high expectations regarding the project designer's role. Local public authorities' ownership and leadership of the SUMP process is crucial to defining a shared and sustainable strategy. This implies involving stakeholders from urban planning, economic development and civil society – as well as institutional and informal/small-scale transport representatives – working first on strategic rather than technical scenarios and bringing stakeholders together around a shared roadmap.



Distribution of modal shares in different cities

Walking continues to establish itself as the dominant mode of transport.



Caption

- Walking
- Private cars
- Public transport
- Cycling
- Private motorcycles
- Motorcycle taxis
- Taxis
- Other (tricycles, etc.)

02

Consolidate ownership and leadership of the Project Management authority

The Project Management authority must be a strong and unifying counterpart, ideally a Transport Authority, such as the CETUD (Executive Council for Sustainable Urban Transport) in Dakar, whose remit enables long-term coordination with all other stakeholders.

It is important to provide awareness-raising and training upstream, as well as Project Management Assistance. It is also necessary to adapt the SUMP terms of reference to simplify the study component according to the maturity of the Project Management authority regarding urban mobility. A simple system needs to be established to conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of SUMP implementation.



Urban Mobility Forum in Antananarivo

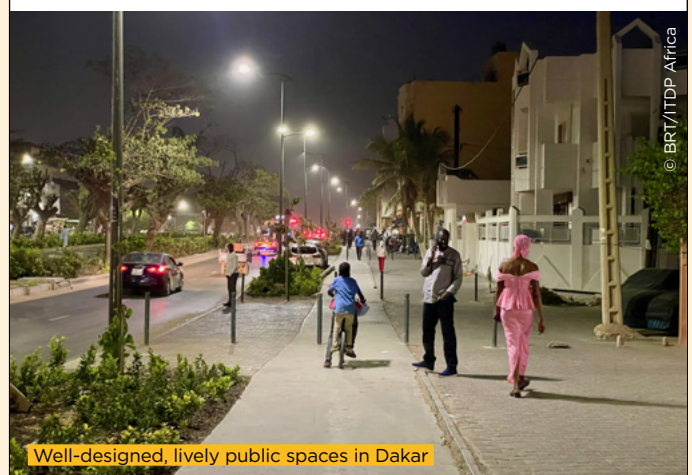
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04

Put pedestrians at the heart of public space

The development of SUMPs highlights the predominance of walking as a mode of transport in many African cities. Long ignored by mobility policies, pedestrians must now become a priority. How? By targeting areas where pedestrian flows are already dense – particularly city centres, areas around schools (as in Bouaké), markets and public transport stops – to foster safer practices and improve user comfort. These transformations can be simple and low-cost (street furniture, curbs and pavement markings).

Certain improvements must become systematic, such as safe pedestrian crossings and continuous, accessible pavements, as well as specific facilities that reduce urban fragmentation and vulnerability to the effects of climate change. In Antananarivo, for instance, the construction of pedestrian footbridges over low-lying areas has had a major impact for a moderate cost. It is also crucial to take into account the needs of the most vulnerable users, including children, the elderly, and people with reduced mobility.



Well-designed, lively public spaces in Dakar

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03

Ensure that decision-makers hear citizens' voices

The outcomes of citizen consultations should be promoted and highlighted to decision-makers in order to demonstrate the potential impact of actions promoting non-motorised mobility and improvements to air quality.

During the implementation phase, it is important to continue dialogue with associations promoting non-motorised mobility and road safety, as well as with residents, to ensure the effectiveness and acceptance of the introduced measures. Such support is invaluable for developing a non-motorised mobility culture, through initiatives such as car-free days (as in Douala and Antananarivo) and the implementation of temporary devices to test new street-sharing design (as in Yaoundé).



Focus group on non-motorised mobility in Dire Dawa

© SYSTRA



Develop peaceful green corridors in cities: an opportunity to promote non-motorised mobility and climate action

The design of urban roads and transport infrastructure planned in SUMP must enhance the safety and comfort of non-motorised mobility by creating safe crossings, wide, well-lit and shaded pedestrian paths, and cycling facilities, as well as by organising other uses of public space (street vendors, parking, informal transport stops, etc.). The development of Dakar's BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) network has demonstrated that it is possible to combine collective transport infrastructure with measures that promote both non-motorised mobility and climate resilience.

Integrating green and blue corridors, and more broadly nature-based solutions (NbS), provides a concrete response to the dual challenge of climate change adaptation (flood control, heat island mitigation, resilience, etc.) and the creation of attractive public spaces for residents. This approach must be linked with spatial planning and urban development frameworks to integrate these notions into SUMP.

Finally, ensuring ownership and respect for the new public spaces is crucial so that areas dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists remain unobstructed.

Urban BRT corridor integrating non-motorised mobility and vegetation in Dakar

Mobilise and optimise financing by maximising social and climate impact

The operationalisation of SUMP effectively contributes to climate change mitigation, local climate action plans and NDCs.² In contexts where own-source revenues are very limited, climate finance access is a key lever for implementing SUMP actions – particularly those with the strongest decarbonisation potential, such as the electrification of public and informal transport systems. Highlighting the benefits in terms of GHG reduction of the actions to be implemented can also facilitate access to funders and donors. However, it is essential to adopt realistic action plans, adapted to local capacities.



Vegetation potential and available street space for new sharing of roadways in Yaoundé

² NDCs: Nationally Determined Contributions. These represent the efforts made by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.



What about tomorrow?

The lessons learned from the preparation and implementation of these six Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) in Africa – though diverse in their contexts – have revealed key success factors, levers and obstacles to overcome in order to improve and decarbonise urban mobility, with special attention to non-motorised mobility.

Improving the safety and comfort of walking – the main mode of travel – remains central. Cycling is also an affordable alternative to be supported; otherwise, it will be gradually replaced by more polluting and dangerous motorised modes. Securing bicycle use offers a major, low-cost alternative, particularly for “long walkers.”

New challenges are emerging, such as the electrification of public and informal transport fleets, digital innovation, and artificial intelligence – all opportunities to decarbonise mobility and improve its use. However, these transitions will only make sense if public spaces already meet the dual challenge of climate-resilient infrastructure and attractiveness for non-motorised mobility, contributing to a better quality of life in cities.

The French Global Environment Facility (FFEM – *Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial*) finances innovative projects that support the environment in developing countries. It backs initiatives capable of generating local environmental, social and economic benefits. Created in 1994 by the French government following the first Earth Summit, it has already supported more than 420 projects in over 120 countries, two-thirds of which are in Africa.

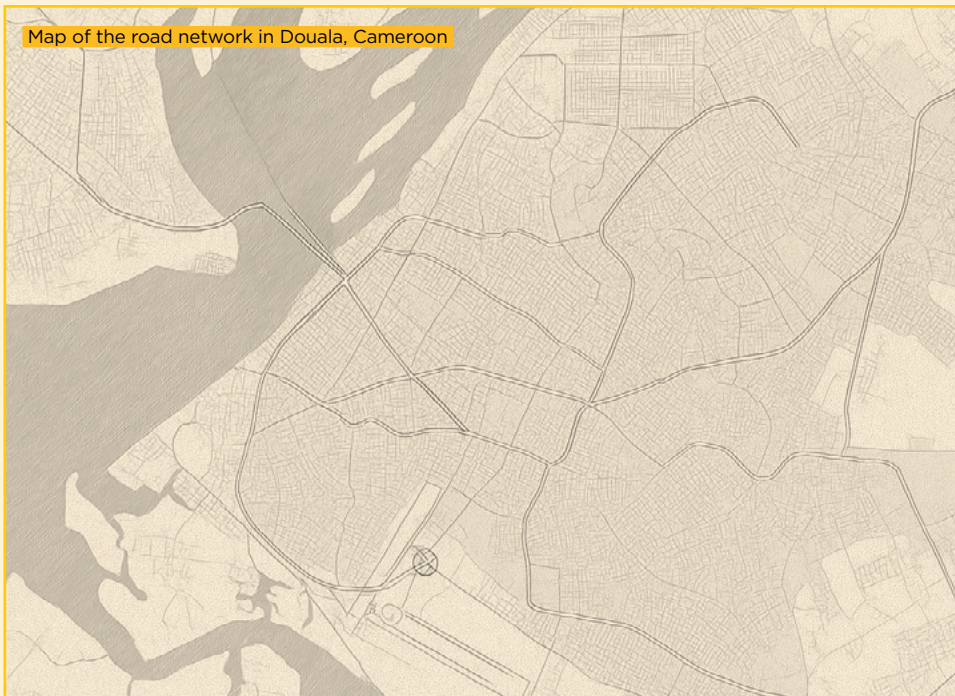
FFEM-funded projects aim to preserve biodiversity, climate, international waters, land and the ozone layer, and to combat chemical pollution.

The FFEM draws lessons from these pilot projects so that the most effective solutions can be replicated elsewhere or on a larger scale.

It works in partnership with actors from both the Global South and North, public and private alike, including NGOs, local authorities and communities, public institutions, companies, as well as other donors and international organisations.

The projects it funds are also supported by the ministries represented on its Steering Committee or by the French Development Agency (AFD – *Agence Française de Développement*).

Map of the road network in Douala, Cameroon



Recommendations made
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