

Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa
Import quality used vehicles to increase African road safety and improve environmental standards
Metadata
<p>Countries/territories/regions involved: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, European Union, Japan, Tunisia, Uganda, United States of America</p> <p>Nominated by: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)</p> <p>Primary SDG: 3 SDG target: 3.6</p> <p>Secondary SDGs: 11, 13 SDG targets: 11.2; 13.2</p> <p>Supported by: United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNECE, Federation Internationale D'Automobile (FIA), International Motor Vehicles Inspection Committee (CITA), International Transport Forum (ITF), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), World Health Organization (WHO), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community Of Central African States (ECCAS)</p> <p>Implementing entities: UNEP, UNECE</p> <p>Project status: Ongoing</p> <p>Project period: June 2020 – December 2022</p> <p>URL of the practice: https://roadsafetyfund.un.org/en/case-studies/safer-and-cleaner-used-vehicles-africa</p>
The challenges
<p>There is an absence of global and/or regional used-car trade standards which are fundamental to reducing road traffic deaths and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2018, Africa imported over 1.45 million used light-duty vehicles, most of which were more than 15 years old and offered low levels of vehicle safety features. Africa accounts for 60 percent of global road fatalities, while having only 2 percent of the world's vehicles.¹</p> <p>By 2050, the African vehicle fleet is set to grow four to five times and 80-90 percent of this growth will come from the import of used vehicles. These vehicles provide no environmental protection and pose a threat to global greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), periodic technical inspections of cars in Africa are needed to decrease fatal accidents by overcoming technical defects and to reduce gas emissions by ensuring that vehicles are well-functioned.</p>
Towards a solution
<p>To address the above challenge, the project Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa sets an agreed minimum requirement for the trade of used cars by both exporting and importing countries to reverse the excessive quantities of low-quality used cars that are imported to Africa, and that are contributing to high road traffic deaths and environmental pollution. The project is also establishing inspection and</p>

¹ <https://roadsafetyfund.un.org/projects/safer-and-cleaner-used-vehicles-africa>.

monitoring frameworks in countries, including compliance systems to ensure used vehicles meet agreed standards and policies.

This project supports SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 13 (climate action). The project also raises public awareness through media training and capacity building for key stakeholders, including policymakers, vehicle inspectors, customs officers and administration civil servants.

To implement the project, the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) partners joined forces as co-creators and co-implementers to address the challenges faced from different angles. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) hosts the global leading regulatory body for vehicles to support exporting countries in adopting used car standards and promotes international cooperation for development in Africa. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supports African importing countries and helps them to adhere to a minimum level of United Nations regulations for used vehicles and supports the formulation of related national regulations. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) helps with economic integration in Africa. The Federation Internationale D'Automobile (FIA) Foundation supports global road safety advocacy and philanthropy, while the International Motor Vehicles Inspection Committee (CITA) leads on vehicle inspection and compliance issues worldwide and has the required expertise to develop the required technical compliance training and systems in importing African countries. The International Transport Forum (ITF) is one of the leading vehicle data organizations.

Through South-South cooperation and knowledge transfer between the countries and organizations involved, national and regional stakeholders have been trained on effective communication on policy development, means of enforcement and benefits of regulating used cars. UNEP launched the 'Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles' website to facilitate open access to information on the issue and the initiative.

As a result of this project, a regionally harmonized vehicle directive was adopted in September 2020 by Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The directive stipulates that from 1 January 2021 all vehicles imported, both new and used, both petrol and diesel, must comply with a minimum of Euro 4/IV vehicle emissions standards, meaning petrol cars can produce CO, total hydrocarbons and NOx (nitrous oxide) emissions of no more than 1.0, 0.10 and 0.08 grams/kilometres, respectively. All light-duty vehicles imported have an age limit of five years with a ten-year implementation period, which by default means that used car fleets will have life-saving vehicle safety features that necessarily accompany newer model used cars.

This system change has already greatly reduced emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases by up to 90 percent. A UNEP report on the Global Trade in Used Vehicles has raised awareness on the scale of the safety problem. In addition, the regulatory reform supported Gambia, Nigeria and Togo to revise and align their national clean fuels and vehicle standards to the regionally agreed directives and assisted the East Africa sub-region in the harmonization and implementation of their vehicle regulations.

Apart from the above innovative policy change that improves competitive advantages of these countries, the project reinforces capacity building to ensure its long-term sustainability, including review of the regulatory frameworks in place in the main used vehicle exporting countries, review of the digital exchange of vehicle information to prevent falsification of vehicle documentation and establishment of a set of minimum performance requirements of vehicles at the time of construction and minimum performance requirements at the time of export.

In summary, this project limits air pollution by adoption of regionally harmonized emission standards, reduces road fatality and injury by establishment of an inspection and monitoring framework and

supports national and regional capacity building for policy development, inspection and enforcement by training, information and communication. With shared lessons learned in east Africa, and with UNRSF serving as a convenor, it is highly probably the project can be replicated in other countries, especially in the remaining African countries.

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Related resources

1. UNRSF 2021 report: [From Resolution to Results | UNROAD](#)
2. UNEP 2020 report: [Global Trade in Used Vehicles Report | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

3. UNEP 2021 report: [Used Vehicles and The Environment - Progress and updates](#)
4. CITA 2021: [Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles](#)
5. “The importance of regulating the global trade in used vehicles” video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhtId9XI-0U&t=90s