

Ibagué, Colombia

Partner city

Status of the project: Completed technical assistance and ongoing pilot project



Basic Information

Urban area: 56,8 km²

Population: 529,635 | Growth rate: 0.69%

Region capital city

GDP per capita: USD 5,024

Modal Share:

Formal public transport: 34.37%

Informal public transport: 0.3%

Walking: 26.89%

Cycling: 0.9%

Private cars: 11.1%

Private motorbikes or 2-wheelers: 15.08%

Taxis: 7.26%

Other: 4.7%

National GHG emissions per capita: 3.58 (tCO₂eq)

Exposure to climate change: MEDIUM

Context

Ibagué has 541,101 inhabitants (DANE, 2018), distributed 501,991 (92.77 %) in the municipal capital and 39,110 (7.23 %) in populated and dispersed rural centres. Urban area is located in the Andean region with great environmental richness, and it is strategically placed within the country, establishing economic, social, and cultural interactions with cities such as Bogotá and Cali, 205 km and 279 km away, respectively. According to the report Ibagué Sostenible (2018), the city has great opportunities to consolidate its vocation and play a more relevant role at the national level. Regarding territorial articulation, Ibagué is an obligatory point of passage between the Pacific and the centre of the country. This circumstance has positioned the city as a road articulator facilitating the mobilisation of passengers and cargo. Additionally, Ibagué's economy revolves around commerce, services, agriculture and mining, generating products and services of high added value.

Ibagué's urban growth in recent years, especially in its outskirts, has generated accessibility problems to city's downtown and caused travel times to increase substantially. Hence, it is important to integrate new mobility models that connect the historic centre where much of the urban equipment is located. Mobility and Public Space Master Plan estimated that 905,000 trips are made in Ibagué every day, of which 36% are made to work, 25% study, 11% are for personal errands and the remaining 28% for shopping, and accessing health, recreation, and others. Mobility accounts for 32% of total CO₂ emissions in Ibagué, which makes it the second most polluting sector in the city. The city has 35.4 kilometres of cycle infrastructure.

The municipality of Ibagué does not have exclusive roads for public transportation since the Strategic Public Transportation System (SEPT – Mass Transit System) was approved in August 2020 and now it is under implementation.

According to the Mobility and Public Space Master Plan, the public transportation service has 32 routes with a vehicle fleet of 1,018 vehicles, of which 73% are buses, 16% are coaches and the remaining 11% are minibuses. The city has a Master Plan of Mobility and Public Spaces.

The Mayor's Office of Ibagué, headed by Mayor Andrés Fabián Hurtado Barrera (2020-2024) has 15 sectoral secretariats: General, Planning, Finance, Administrative, Government, Health, Education, Economic Development, Culture, Environment and Risk Management, Community Social Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Infrastructure, Mobility and Information and Communication Technologies – TIC. The local Counterpart has the mandate and responsibility to finance mass public transport infrastructure. It does not have authority to borrow from international finance sources. Systems and procedures are partially in place to monitor, evaluate and report on urban mobility.

The project implemented by GIZ through the EUROCLIMA+ Program consists in a pilot plan for the implementation of a sharing system for assisted pedalling bicycles for the city of Ibagué. This system will have eight stations, 69 mechanical bicycles and 16 electric-assisted bicycles across the city centre. The strategic objective of the project is to increase the number of residents and circulating populations in downtown using shared bicycles while promoting cycling as main mode of transportation. Additionally, the pilot project aims to build capacities for sustainable mobility of public authorities. The pilot seeks to reduce the levels of environmental pollution from mobile sources and promote healthy lifestyles by increasing the modal share of bicycles from individual motorised transport.

For the implementation of the public bicycle system pilot, EUROCLIMA+ counts as a strategic ally with INFIBAGUÉ, an entity that seeks to encourage, promote, and contribute to sustainable development and a social sense of the city by bringing together government agencies, economic associations and citizens. The mentioned organisation will be responsible for the implementation of the pilot project. To this end, licenses have been arranged with the Planning Secretariat for the installation of the stations in public spaces and the mechanisms for the future sustainability of the pilot have been coordinated with the Municipal Council.

The technical assistance contributes to institutional strengthening by improving the capacities of the mayor's staff involved in the project by linking them to the private sector and other experiences through the Community of Practice on sustainable urban mobility.

Support from the Partnership

Technical assistance: Pilot Project Development

Funded by: European Commission

Funding amount: EUR 500,000

Implemented by: GIZ through the EUROCLIMA+ Program

Local counterpart: Ibagué Municipality - INFIBAGUÉ

Supported activities:

- Formulation of a bike sharing pilot project
- Development of a strategic planning document that ensures the sustainability of the project
- Proposal of a business model combining both public and private resources for the bike sharing system
- Capacity building of public authorities for sustainable mobility planning

Status of implementation

Project start: 2019

Project completion: 2023 Q1

Completed outputs:

- Technical, legal and financial structuring in the feasibility stage and support in the tender process for the system implementation
- Successfully completed tender process, in which the implementation and start-up of the pilot was awarded in Q3 of 2021
- INFIBAGUÉ managed permits for the installation of stations in public spaces with the Planning Secretariat
- Manufactured bicycles, and stations and software development
- The bicycles arrived in the country at the end of March 2022
- Installation and stations deployment Q3, 2022
- Tender process to select an operator: November 2022
- Consultant additional support to identify new income sources and business models for future operation (when the system consolidates and leaves pilot stage)

Next expected outputs:

- Pilot project selection of operator and contract signing: January 2023
- Inauguration of the system in February 2023
- Deliverables of consultant additional support: March 2023

Insights from practice: key pilot project takeaways

Considering that the transport sector in Ibagué is the second responsible for CO₂ emissions, it is paramount to promote strategies to decarbonise transport. The implementation of a public bicycle pilot is in line with this objective, as well as promoting healthy lifestyle habits and offering alternatives for people with low income.

Lessons Learned from Ibagué

The implementation of public bicycle systems requires a clear and defined steering structure within the city, which should ideally be implemented from the project structuring stage, so that it reaches maturity and can be operated smoothly.

In the same way, it is essential that the city selects a business model according to its specific conditions, it is advisable to incorporate various funding sources to reach financial closure more easily.

Results and perspectives for scaling

The findings and lessons learned from the structuring process of the Ibagué public bicycle system are part of the [Guide for the implementation of Public Bicycle Systems](#) issued by the national government on August 2, 2022 with the support of EUROCLIMA+ and C40 Cities Finance Facility, as part of the actions included in the [National Active Mobility Strategy with a gender and differential approach - ENMA](#) (also supported by EUROCLIMA+). This guide includes a step-by-step guide and recommendations for replicating and scaling up the implementation of public bicycle systems in Colombia.