

La Paz, Bolivia

Partner city

Status of the project: Ongoing pilot project



Basic Information

Urban area: 3,152 km²

Population: 951,800 (2019) | Growth rate: 0.7%

Country capital city

GDP per capita: USD 3,143.0 (2020)

Modal Share:

Public transport (formal and informal): 79,18%

Walking: 11,92%

Cycling: 0,04%

Private vehicles (cars, motorbikes): 6,75%

Other (freight vehicles, taxis): 2,11%

National GHG emissions per capita: 1,77 (tCO₂eq) (2020)

Exposure to climate change: HIGH

Context

La Paz is the economic and administrative capital of Bolivia, and with an elevation of roughly 3,650m is the highest capital city in the world. Its metropolitan area includes the even higher city of El Alto with an average elevation of 4,000m. Both cities are connected via one of the biggest cable car networks in the world but are not integrated from an administrative standpoint. The metropolitan area of La Paz-El Alto has a population of about 2 million inhabitants, of which approximately 950 000 live in La Paz.

The Municipality of La Paz (the counterpart for this project) has the mandate and responsibility to finance mass public transport infrastructure. International finance sources can lend money to the counterpart by agreeing on a sovereign loan with the national government, who then retrocedes it to the municipal government. Systems and procedures are partially in place to monitor, evaluate and report on urban mobility.

In 2014, the city inaugurated the country's first real public transport system: a structural network of buses named Puma Katari that travel along the main arteries observing fixed stops. This is a remarkable innovation compared to the pre-existing "micro" buses stopping on demand and operating at a low commercial speed. The cable car network, called Mi Teleférico, also functioning since 2014, is composed of 11 lines that transport about 250,000 to 300,000 passengers daily (2019). Four new lines will be operating by 2025 according to the network's expansion plan.

Compared to other modes, cycling is nearly invisible (0.04%) in the modal split, with less than a thousand trips made daily by bicycle. The city of La Paz is topographically challenging for cyclists, with steep slopes and an altitude variation of 600m from the lowest to the highest point of the city. The development strategy of the cycling infrastructure focuses on the implementation of micro-networks connected through the collective transport systems – Cable Car and Puma Katari. These micro-networks will be located in neighbourhoods whose slope allows connections in order to cover trips for shopping, work or entertainment.

The objective of the pilot project is to design and construct a pilot micro-network in the Southern Macro District of the municipality of La Paz proposing an intermodal connection, promoting the use of bicycles in urban mobility.

Support from the Partnership

Technical assistance: Pilot Project development

Funded by: European Union through the EUROCLIMA+ programme

Funding amount: EUR 500,000

Implemented by: AFD through EUROCLIMA+

Local counterpart: Autonomous Government of the Municipality of La Paz (GAMLP)

Supported activities:

- Initiation: report on the design and budget for the cycle path proposed by GAMLP
- Preparation: preparation of bid tender documents for the works, support in the design of the communication campaign for the launch of the bicycle infrastructure
- Training: 20-hour course and study tour on cycling infrastructure for GAMLP staff
- Diagnostic: report on the site supervision strategy for cycling infrastructure projects, business model for a public bicycle system
- Implementation: construction of Phase I of the cycling path, technical support during implementation

Status of implementation

Project start: 2023 Q1

Project completion: 2024 Q1

Completed outputs:

- Bid tender documents for technical assistance contract

Next expected outputs:

- Support the design of the communication campaign to launch the project, in addition to covering the costs of dissemination
- Analyse the design and budget of the cycling-infrastructure proposed by the SMM-GAMLP technical team and make recommendations for improvements and additions to optimise its operation and cost based on best international practices
- Advise the technical team of SMM-GAMLP in the integrated planning of the Cycle-infrastructure Network for the Southern Macro District of the municipality of La Paz, Phase I (Calacoto and San Miguel areas) and during its construction

Highlights in the past year

Capacity building and infrastructure implementation interact to encourage cycling

This pilot project aims to test the development model of micro-networks of cycling infrastructure in certain neighbourhoods proposed by the Municipality. It will train technical teams, produce ground-knowledge for future projects, and provide the necessary tools for the completion of the integrated cycling strategy in La Paz.

To December 2022, the project closed the bidding stage, and the international consulting team overseeing the bike path network implementation network was selected. This consulting team will have a permanent local team. The next steps are expected to start the development of the consulting contract and elaborate the terms of reference for the construction of the cycle infrastructure in this city.