

# Ibagué, Colombia

Partner city

Status of the project: **Completed Pilot Project**



## Basic Information

Urban area: 56.8 km<sup>2</sup>

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 (tCO<sub>2</sub>eq)

Exposure to climate change: MEDIUM

## Context

Ibagué has 541,101 inhabitants (DANE, 2018), of which 501,991 (92.77%) are located in the municipal capital, and 39,110 (7.23%) in populated and dispersed rural centres. The urban area is positioned in the Andean region with great ecological riches. Its strategic position in the country enables strong economic, social, and cultural interactions with cities such as Bogotá and Cali, located 205 km and 279 km away, respectively. According to the Ibagué Sostenible report (2018), the city has great opportunities to consolidate its vocation and play a more relevant role at the national level. Regarding its territorial articulation, Ibagué is an obligatory point of passage between the Pacific Ocean and the centre of the country. This location has positioned the city as a critical node facilitating the mobilisation of passengers and cargo. Additionally, Ibagué's economy revolves around commerce, services, agriculture, mining, and generating products and services of high added value.

In recent years, Ibagué's urban growth, especially on its outskirts, has generated accessibility problems to the city's downtown area 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. The Mobility and Public Space Master Plan estimated that 905,000 trips are made every day in Ibagué, of which 36% are made to commute, 25% to study, 11% for personal errands and the remaining 28% for shopping, accessing health, recreation, and other activities. Mobility accounts for 32% of Ibagué's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, making it the second most polluting sector in the city. The city has 35.4 kilometres of cycle infrastructure. The municipality of Ibagué does not yet have exclusive roads for public transportation since the Strategic Public Transportation System (SEPT – Mass Transit System) was approved in August 2020 and is now under implementation. According to the city's 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 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 - INFIBAGUÉ, Ibagué Municipality, has the mandate and responsibility to finance mass public transport infrastructure. However, it does not have the 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 of 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 a main mode of transportation. Additionally, the pilot project aims to build public authorities' capacity in sustainable mobility. 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+ acts as a strategic ally with INFIBAGUÉ, an entity that seeks to encourage, promote, and contribute to sustainable development and foster a social sense of the city by bringing together government agencies, economic associations and citizens. INFIBAGUÉ 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. It does so 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

**Finance leverage:** 195,000 EUR approx. (ordinary budget from local government up to 2024)

**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
- Building public authority capacity 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 system implementation
- Successfully completed the 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
- Completed software development
- The bicycles arrived in the country at the end of March 2022
- Installation and station deployment Q3, 2022
- Tender process to select an operator in November 2022
- Pilot project private operator selection and contract signing in January 2023
- Inauguration of the system in February 2023
- Deliverables of consultant additional support (operational scheme options) in March 2023

## Insights from Practice: Key Pilot Project Takeaways

Considering that the transport sector in Ibagué is the second most responsible for CO<sub>2</sub> 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 incomes.

## Lessons Learned from Ibagué

The implementation of public bicycle systems requires a clear and defined steering structure within the city. This 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 Colombian national government on August 2, 2022, with the support of EUROCLIMA+ and the 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.

## Highlights in the past year

The system was put into service in February 2023 through an indirect public operation scheme (private operator paid by the local government). To date, it has more than 700 active users who together have made more than 3,000 trips with a journey time of 25 minutes each.

From 2024, the system will start to be operated directly by Infibagué, who, during these first months of operation, have acquired the needed experience so that they can have better control at a lower cost.