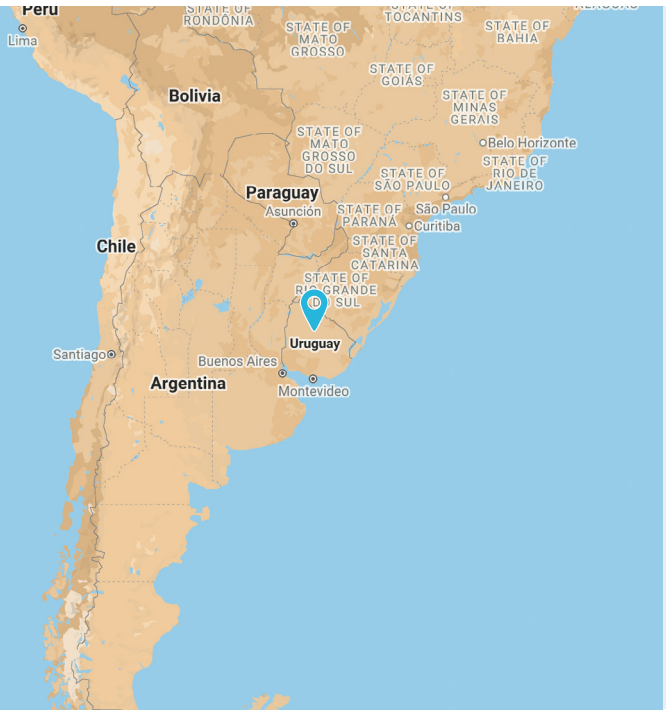
Uruguay

Partner country

Status of the project: **Completed National Urban Mobility Policy**



Basic Information

Population: **3,499,451 (2023)** | Growth rate: **0,35%**

Percentage of urban population: **96.1%**

GDP per capita: **USD 17,277**

Percentage of population living below the national poverty line: **8.1%**

Annual average infrastructure expenditures as a percent of GDP: **5,9%**

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC): **Unquantified transport-related NDC**

National GHG emissions per capita: **1.90 (tCO_2eq)**

Proportion of transport-related GHG emissions: **41%**

Exposure to climate change: **MEDIUM**

Context

Uruguay has a high urbanisation rate, with 95% of its population living in cities and a continued migration trend from rural areas to urban centres. Urban expansion occurs at low densities, with half of the population concentrated in Montevideo's metropolitan area. Other cities are significantly smaller, with few exceeding 100,000 inhabitants.

While Uruguay has high access rates to public services such as water and electricity, urban growth has often been unplanned, leading to settlements with inadequate public transport infrastructure. As a result, transport systems are inefficient, costly, and of low quality. Many residents, including those from low-income sectors, have shifted to motorcycles or private vehicles. Economic growth has further fueled a rise in private vehicle ownership, reducing public transport demand and worsening congestion, air pollution, and noise in cities like Montevideo.

Due to the small size of most Uruguayan cities, public transport is often unviable at scale and, in some cases, nonexistent. This increases reliance on private vehicles, creating mobility barriers for those who cannot afford a motorcycle or car.

The public transport sector is highly regulated, with Departmental Governments (GGDD) responsible for granting public transport services and establishing the requirements for corridors and units, e.g. buses and taxis. Electric mobility has been promoted jointly through the Working Group on Energy Efficiency in Transport, led by the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM) with the participation of the Ministry of Transport and Public Construction (MTOP), the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), the Ministry of Housing and Territorial Planning (MVOT) and the Ministry of the Environment (MA), the national public electricity company (UTE), and the Departmental Government of Montevideo (IM).

Private and social groups engaged in urban mobility include business sectors and civil society, such as bicycle user groups. Public transport companies and taxi drivers collaborate with departmental governments and urban mobility ministries. In recent years, business groups have been key in advancing electric mobility in Uruguay. Various stakeholders have contributed to promoting instruments, training, regulatory awareness, and discussions on the benefits and challenges of electric mobility implementation.

Transport accounts for nearly half of Uruguay's energy-related GHG emissions. Urban electric mobility can maximise the benefits of the country's low-carbon electricity matrix. Transforming the transport sector can reduce carbon footprint while providing co-benefits such as lower air and noise pollution. Given that GGDD is the leading authority for urban transport, with autonomy from the national level, policy processes involve strong participation through vertical and horizontal governance structures.

Aligned with MobiliseYourCity's framework for National Urban Mobility Policies (NUMP), this technical assistance takes a holistic approach to NUMP formulation. The NUMP in Uruguay aims to enhance access to urban centres through sustainable transport alternatives. Following a "ready-to-implement" approach, the technical assistance has supported policy design, implementation instruments (guides), financing mechanisms for specific measures, and a capacity-building roadmap. It has also facilitated strategic planning, concept design exchanges, workshops, and meetings while providing detailed insights into transport-oriented city planning, e-mobility solutions, and financing mechanisms.

Support from the Partnership

Technical Assistance: National Urban Mobility Policy or Program (NUMP)

Type of NUMP: Policy NUMP

Funded by: European Commission

Funding amount: EUR 1,000,000

Implemented by: GIZ through the EUROCLIMA+ Program

Local counterpart: Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM); National Energy Directorate; Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment

The primary purpose of the NUMP

Objectives: The project aims to strengthen capacities in planning sustainable urban mobility and to lay the foundations for a national program to promote electric urban mobility that includes the development of technical, regulatory, and financial mechanisms.

Supported activities:

- Incorporation of e-mobility into territorial planning instruments
- Development of standards and regulations for new technologies
- Development of financial tools to promote and accelerate public and private investment for vehicle fleet electrification
- Capacity building and institutional strengthening for public and private actors to facilitate vehicle electrification

Status of implementation

Project start: 2018 Q2

Expected project completion: Not defined

Completed outputs:

- National Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning Guide
- National e-mobility guide
- Draft of the National Sustainable Mobility Policy
- A participatory process with national and subnational stakeholders
- 5 Cities have been supported to move towards sustainable mobility

- Capacity building diagnosis and recommendations for a cross-cutting educational system. A capacity development program on designing Mobility Plans at the city level was agreed upon with the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and 12 practitioners from 6 cities. 0202 The program consists of an 8-week self-learning program to be monitored by the UBA online.
- Roadmap for the dissemination of policy and its implementation instruments. The GTP (Project Working Group, for its acronym in Spanish) decided to strengthen institutional capacity by creating a Multisectoral Sustainable Mobility Commission (CIMS). This commission will be piloted with support from Country-Dialogue (a new methodological cooperation format financed by the EUROCLIMA Programme).
- National Policy document.

Next expected outputs

- E-mobility solutions guide
- Cost estimation of the policy implementation. The cost will be estimated after pilot implementation in six cities in the design phase, with support from the country dialogue of EUROCLIMA's new phase.

Core impact indicators baselines

Indicator	Baseline - 2020
Total annual transport-related GHG emissions (Mt CO_2eq)	4,09 Mt CO_2eq[1]
Annual transport-related GHG emissions per capita (kg CO_2eq)	1,170 kg CO_2eq / capita
Air pollution Mean urban air pollution of particulate matter (in µg $PM_{2.5}$) at road-based monitoring stations (Montevideo)	10 µg/m³ of $PM_{2.5}$[2]
Road safety Annual traffic fatalities in the urban area per 100,000 inhabitants	12,06 fatalities[3] / 100,000 hab

Perspectives for implementation

The GTP is responsible for advocating for successful NUMP implementation in Uruguay

The GTP has the technical responsibility to develop the NUMP to be adopted at the political level. Its way of working is a replica of the Working Group on Energy Efficiency in Transport, an essential promoter of electric mobility in Uruguay that the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM) chaired. The GTP has representatives from the environmental, transport, economy, territorial planning ministries, the national public company for electric mobility (UTE) and the Departmental Municipality of Montevideo (IM).

Inspired by these years of joint work building the NUMP, they proposed the creation of the Inter-institutional Commission for Sustainable Mobility (CIMS). This commission will lead the implementation of the NUMP and fill the gap between the national and city levels.

[1] https://catalogodatos.gub.uy/dataset/miem-emisiones-de-co2-por-sector

[2] https://montevideo.gub.uy/sites/default/files/biblioteca/informeanual2023.pdf

[3] https://www.gub.uy/unidad-nacional-seguridad-vial/comunicacion/noticias/informe-datos-siniestralidad-vial-del-ano-2023

Insights from practice: lessons learned from the NUMP process

Although costly and time-consuming, participation enhances NUMP development.

While the need to consider the perspectives of each stakeholder group slowed down the policy development process, including diverse vantage points improved the setting of objectives and allocating responsibilities.

In this context, communication is critical. We advise implementing a dialogue process that engages stakeholders. The input provided by stakeholders should be integrated into an iterative process. We harness the cooperation of stakeholders committed to the policy's implementation, which is one of the most valuable outcomes of the policy process.

Vertical coordination is crucial to effectively meeting local institutions' needs for sustainable urban mobility.

Vertical coordination is crucial for involving stakeholders and ensuring the viability and implementation of the policy. It is essential to carry out this process in several steps to recognise challenges and identify solutions. For example, municipal representatives must tailor their ambitions accordingly if the national government promotes sustainable mobility without providing resources to meet stated goals.

NUMP implementation foresees additional support documents and an adequate governance framework.

The institutional complexity of Uruguay has required an additional effort in coordination. The NUMP implementation transcends the policy document and entails the creation of a National Commission for Sustainable Mobility (CIMS as its acronym in Spanish), the Sustainable Mobility Planning Guide, the E-mobility Guide, a Financing Mechanism, and other actions. A national law will frame Uruguay's NUMP, and the CIMS will lead the enacting of the law. After its adoption, the CIMS is expected to lead and coordinate the process for cities to formulate their Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. Among other responsibilities, the CIMS will regulate access to funds and coordinate local capacity-building.

Sustainable urban mobility planning tools must be adapted to the local context.

Introducing the "ready-to-implement" policy aspect required work time alongside the counterpart to agree on a format tailored to the national regulatory framework. This "ready-to-implement" methodology came late, and its inclusion into the ongoing process created some friction. However, the counterpart kept a holistic perspective, which is crucial to refining the covered aspects. The early engagement of cities was essential to know their challenges and needs for implementation. This process strengthened momentum and commitment from the stakeholders' ecosystem. The methodology provided flexibility to cover sustainable urban mobility planning aspects at the national level while giving room for specific country needs and identity.

2022 was a year for consolidation of a vivid and complex process to reach the NUMP adoption.

The adopted strategy for promoting municipal engagement with the national vision was to provide cities with a solid knowledge base for change. Two guidebooks for municipal authorities now accompany the National Urban Mobility Policy. Specifically, the mobility planning guide supports strategy development at the city level and includes measures and recommendations to consider when planning a sustainable multimodal mobility system. Cities also received an e-mobility guide that offers solutions and highlights aspects to consider when building an e-mobility system at the city level.

There is a lack of commitment and coordination among the ministries involved in policy approval.

The approval and publication of the policy require an interministerial resolution. This must be an agreement between the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM), the Ministry of Transport and Public Construction (MTOP), the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), and the Ministry of Housing and Territorial Planning (MVOT). Not all ministries are interested and willing to participate in this agreement. A needed strategy to coordinate and bring together the interests of these ministries to reach an agreement is currently being developed.

Highlights in the past year

Invitation to participate: advancing adoption.

In 2024, the National Sustainable Urban Mobility Policy (NUMP) was opened for public consultation as part of the National Sectoral Program for Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development. This marks a significant step toward its approval and future implementation.

Updated in December 2024