

Ibagué, Colombia

Partner city

Status of the project: Completed 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), 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. 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, and mining, generating products and services that add 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 CO₂ 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

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 the construction of a 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 implementing 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 project's strategic objective is to increase the number of residents and circulating populations downtown using shared bicycles while promoting cycling as a primary mode of transportation. Additionally, the pilot project aims to build public authorities' capacity for 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 implementing the public bicycle system pilot, EUROCLIMA+ is a strategic ally with *INFIBAGUÉ*. This entity 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 to install the stations in public spaces, and the pilot's mechanisms for future sustainability 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 links 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 project's sustainability.
- 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 Q2

Project completion: 2023 Q2

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 to install 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 CO₂ emissions, promoting strategies to decarbonise transport is paramount. Implementing a public bicycle pilot aligns with this objective, promoting healthy lifestyle habits and offering alternatives for low-income people.

Lessons Learned from Ibagué

Implementing public bicycle systems requires a clear and defined steering structure within the city. Ideally, This should be implemented from the project structuring stage to reach maturity and operate smoothly.

In the same way, the city must select 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 contains 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). It has more than 700 active users who have made more than 3,000 trips together, each with a journey time of 25 minutes.

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