Chile

National Urban Mobility Policies and Investment Programme | Completed

Basic information

Population	→	18,050,000 (2018)
Growth rate	→	1.4%
Percentage of urban population	→	87.8%
GDP per capita (2023)	→	USD 16,522
Percentage of the population living below the national poverty line	→	10.9%[4]
Annual average infrastructure expenditures as a percet of GDP	→	2.2%
Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)	→	100% e-taxis by 2050. 100% urban public transport e-buses by 2040 58% private e-vehicles by 2050 58% commercial e-vehicles by 2050
National GHG emissions per capita	→	5.1 (tCO2eq)
Proportion of transport-related GHG emissions	→	24.1% (2016)
Exposure to climate change	→	HIGH

Context

The Republic of Chile, a country in South America, occupies a long, narrow strip of land between the Andes to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Chile covers an area of 756,096 km² and has a population of 18 million as of 2018. The capital and largest city is Santiago.

Chile's economy is characterised by the exploitation and export of raw materials. In 2012, exports - copper, fruit, fishery products, paper and cellulose pulp, chemicals, and wine - reached USD 83.66 billion, while imports - oil and derived products, chemicals, electrical and telecommunications articles, industrial machinery, vehicles, and natural gas - reached USD 72.2 billion. The public debt was 10.1% of the GDP, of which the external debt amounted to USD 102.1 billion by late 2012.

By 2030, CO2e emissions from the transport sector are likely to increase by 36% from 2007 levels, reaching 46.4 megatons CO2e. This trajectory is strongly correlated with GDP growth, and the business-as-usual projections for 2050 range from 44.5 megatons CO2e for low GDP growth to 84.4 megatons CO2e for high GDP growth.

The Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications (MTT) is responsible for developing Chile's transport system. It develops transport plans for the country's main cities every ten years and manages public transport contracts and subsidies, among other responsibilities.

Due to a highly centralised system, Chilean cities have few competencies for planning sustainable urban mobility. However, as of 2021, municipalities now have new powers in this area under a new decentralisation law. Since October 2019, Chile has been experiencing a profound social and political crisis, which has led to a referendum on constitutional renewal.

Despite Chile's efforts to electrify public transport, such as ongoing fleet electrification in several regions, the country still shows significant development inequality between the capital and other cities. Indeed, public transportation is still informal in several towns and does not meet the same qualitative and quantitative standards as in the capital city. Moreover, commuting patterns in Santiago show that access to public transport remains unequal, meaning that even when infrastructure is available, different socioeconomic or demographic groups face different barriers to commuting.

The implementation of a National Urban Mobility Policy (NUMP) aims to support cities in the development of sustainable urban mobility, either through the establishment of multisectoral political guidelines (Strategy) or the facilitation of a financing programme, in addition to supporting commitments of the NDC and the country's Long-Term Strategy (LTS).

Technical assistance for the development of the NUMP has strengthened the country's institutional framework, mainly by facilitating dialogue and agreements from a multisectoral (transport, urban planning, environment, and energy) and multilevel (regional and local) perspective.

Support from the Partnership

Technical Assistance: National Urban Mobility Policy or Programme (NUMP)
Type of NUMP: Mixed Programme and Policy NUMP
Funded by: European Commission
Funding amount: EUR 1,000,000
Implemented by: Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) through the Euroclima+ Programme
Local counterpart: Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications

Main purpose of the NUMP:

- Offer cities and regions a general enabling framework for Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans
- Provide technical guidance on a wide range of technical issues relevant to the transport sector in the context of reducing GHG emissions
- Offer cities a general enabling framework for SUMPs
- Regulate a wide range of technical issues
- Provide technical advice on a wide range of technical issues

Supported activities:

- Design a National Programme for Sustainable Mobility
- Elaboration of the National Strategy for Sustainable Urban Mobility (writing, revising, and promoting the participation of other institutions in the process)
- Various NUMP Chile roundtable meetings and strategic planning of the NUMP activities
- Virtual peer-to-peer workshops (with Brazil, Ecuador, and Uruguay) and internal workshops with several MTT departments
- Development of technical studies relevant in the context of the Chilean Long-Term Strategy for Fighting Climate Change (Emissions Inventory, Emissions Projection, Status Quo Analysis, among others)

Status of NUMP development

Project start date: 2018 Q4
NUMP completion date: 2023 Q4

Completed outputs:

- NUMP Workshops in Quito, Ecuador and Bogota, Colombia (March 2019 and February 2020)
- Status quo analysis and multisectoral workshops to build a shared understanding of the urban mobility situation, including mobility challenges and current actions implemented by seven sectoral ministries.
- Internal round of 3 workshops (Nov-Dec 2020) with the participation of representatives from most departments (regional and national) of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunication (MTT) to define the objectives and action lines of the National Strategy on Sustainable Urban Mobility (134 participants in total)
- Study of the emissions inventory from the transport sector (2020)
- Study on emissions projections from the transport sector (2021)
- National Strategy for Sustainable Mobility (2021)

Next expected outputs:

- Investment Programme to support the implementation of sustainable mobility measures by subnational governments (currently in process)
- MRV process at the national level

NUMP key measures and cost estimates

The following table highlights the most significant measures identified in the NUMP.

Measure	Cost estimate
1. Integrating mobility into the territory • Instruments of urban planning oriented to public transit and active mobility • Urban design and management oriented toward public transit and active mobility • Intersectionality with a territorial approach • Sustainable urban logistics	Not quantified[1]
2. Reducing the adverse effects of urban mobility on the environment by strengthening climate mitigation actions and addressing local negative externalities • Climate-oriented social assessment of projects • Disincentives for polluting vehicle usage • Disincentives for polluting vehicle purchases • Polluting vehicle control • Fleet decarbonisation • Promotion of technological shifts for private vehicles	Not quantified

[1] The National Sustainable Mobility Strategy provides a repertoire of 30 types of measures. Regional governments wishing to develop a sustainable urban mobility plan should select from the most suitable measures for their context. Hence, there is not cost estimate for the 30 types of measures. Their costs depend on the specific application that each regional government will do (for example, how many kilometres of bikeways or pedestrian paths).

Measure	Cost estimate
3. Promoting more efficient use of urban and road space by enabling better travel demand management and enhancing access through prioritising sustainable modes of transport • Reduction of the need to travel • Redistribution of road space • Improvement of public transit levels of service • Incentives for public transit operation and ridership • promotion and facilitation of intermodality • Disincentives to inefficient car ownership and use	Not quantified
4. Active and safe mobility • Walking and cycling infrastructure • Road safety initiatives that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists • Promotion of intermodality between cycling and public transit • Incentives for active mobility	Not quantified
5. Promoting inclusion, universal accessibility, and gender equality in mobility systems • Universally accessible infrastructure and public spaces • Universally accessible public transit • Safe public transit	Not quantified
6. Integrating citizens' vision into decision-making • Appropriate and transparent participatory processes leading to agreements • Decentralised governance for sustainable mobility • Arrangements allowing citizens to raise their concerns and communicate about processes	Not quantified
7. Progressing towards greater integration and transparency of mobility data, enhancing information access for users, and strengthening the technological bases for planners, operators, and decision-makers • Improvement of mobility data collection, processing, and analysis arrangements • Digital transformation for an integrated transit management • Strengthening of information services for citizens • Development of integrated transport services	Not quantified

Finance leverage

Leveraged financing (resulting from or enabled by the NUMP preparation process)

Description	Source of financing	Type	Status	Amount (EUR)
Santiago Red Metropolitana de Movilidad – E-Bus Expansion. 992 e-buses to replace part of existing diesel bus fleet[2]	World Bank. Co-lenders: IDB Invest; BancoEstado Chile	Loan	Secured	289,372,800
Procurement of 679 100 % electric buses and associated charging infrastructure for Santiago's Red Metropolitana de Movilidad. (part of various projects across the years)[3]	Société Générale (as Joint Lead Arranger) teamed up with Infrabridge)	Loan	Secured	127,401,422
Regional Public Transport and Road Safety Program[4]	IADB	Loan	Grant	252,360
Modernisation plan for public transport in the Greater Concepción area, including procurement of 225 electric buses under the Red Concepción de Movilidad framework and related infrastructure[5]	Regional government and national investment funds	Loan	Public program investments (capital + operational); some bids include private financing elements.	N/A

Associated financing (independently secured financing for measures related to the NUMP)

Description	Source of financing	Type	Status	Amount (EUR)
Moving Chile – Electric Mobility Project (Pilot & Enabling Financing Mechanisms)[6]	IKI and BMUV GIZ implemented	Grant	Secured	2,000,000

[2] https://www.ifc.org/en/pressroom/2023/ifc-s-first-investment-in-e-buses-globally-to-support-largest-e
[3] https://wholesale.banking.societegenerale.com/en/news-insights/all-news-insights/news-details/news/e-bus-adoption-in-chile-picks-up-speed/
[4] https://www.iadb.org/en/project/CH-T1290
[5] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A1s_Movilidad_%28Gran_Concepci%C3%B3n%29
[6] https://www.giz.de/en/projects/transport-moving-chile
https://www.international-climate-initiative.com/en/project/moving-chile-19-i-397-chl-g-moving-chile-1/

Projected impacts

Currently, the NUMP Chile includes a catalogue of measures but no action plan or NUMP scenario with quantified impact.

Indicator	Impact 2030 (NUMP vs BAU)	Baseline - 2020	Projected 2030 BAU	Projected 2030 NUMP scenario
Total annual GHG emissions (Mt CO2eq)	Not possible to quantify	20.01 Mt CO2eq	22.25 Mt CO2eq	Not yet quantified
Annual transport related GHG emissions per capita (kg CO2eq)	Not yet quantified	853 kg CO2eq / capita	1174 kg CO2eq / capita	Not yet quantified

Insights from practice: lessons learned from the NUMP process

Integrated multi-sector and multilevel coordination, communication, and participation have been critical elements in the preparation of Chile's NUMP

Regarding multisectoral and multilevel governance, Chile is a highly centralised country with a low public culture of territorial linkage and involvement in decision-making and policy-making. This situation has impacted the development of the NUMP due to the difficulties in incorporating the particularities of the different territories into their development plans, as well as in linking transport with other sectors and ministries, making it challenging to formulate comprehensive measures to reduce emissions.

Moreover, the transport sector's response to the climate crisis remains challenging. Although the NUMP has facilitated this approach, there is still a significant gap in the transport sector for communicating the impact it has on the climate and the opportunities for change in a transparent and timely manner.

In Chile, integrated urban planning still fails to incorporate both the climate crisis and other development issues, such as gender perspectives and inequality. The different sectors directly influencing urban spaces and their dynamics have not yet fully assumed these areas.

Local governments possess more profound knowledge of urban mobility needs.

Regional governments possess greater knowledge and understanding of selecting sustainable mobility measures better suited to their contexts. Hence, the National Sustainable Mobility Strategy offers cities and regions a general enabling framework for developing SUMPs, which local governments will complement with context-specific insights and adapt the proposed measures to create effective SUMP roadmaps.

Perspectives for implementation

The national government is promoting the NUMP to encourage cities to take action.

The most important output of the NUMP Chile project has been the National Sustainable Mobility Strategy. This Strategy presents a repertoire of 30 types of sustainable mobility measures. Thus, this Strategy offers cities and regions a general enabling framework for developing sustainable urban mobility plans. Regional governments wishing to create a sustainable urban mobility plan should select the 30 measures most suitable to their context.

The transport planning agency (SECTRA) of the Chilean Transport Ministry is currently conducting workshops with professional teams from different regional governments to demonstrate how the National Sustainable Mobility Strategy works and can assist them in developing SUMPs for their cities. Until now, one regional government has prepared a SUMP (Antofagasta) and is tendering a consultancy project to support the development of a SUMP in another city within the region (Calama).

Effective sustainable mobility implementation in Chile requires improved interministerial coordination and precise funding mechanisms for regional governments[7].

In Chile, sustainable mobility responsibilities are primarily concentrated at the national level, particularly within the ministries of transport, housing and urban planning. Regional governments have limited authority and budget to develop mobility initiatives. To address this, an implementation strategy was initiated through the formulation of a Sustainable Mobility Program, designed as a competitive fund from the central government to support regional governments in planning and implementing mobility projects. However, a key challenge has been the dispersion of decision-making power and funding across multiple ministries, making it difficult to align interests for effective program management. Moving forward, stronger interministerial coordination and institutional alignment will be critical for successfully implementing sustainable mobility policies at the regional level.

Highlights from the past year

Chile Accelerates Electric Bus Deployment Nationwide

In 2025, 3,544 electric buses are now operating in Santiago, representing 55% of the city's public-transport fleet, and the Ministry of Transport expects this to reach 68% of the fleet. Minister Juan Carlos Muñoz highlighted that electrification has grown 355% under the current administration, with electric buses already operating in nine cities nationwide. The rollout is supported by new route concessions and fleet renewal processes.

[7] To know more about lessons learned of the Euroclima's Urban Mobility Component visit https://despacio.org/portfolio/movilidad-urbana-euroclima-resultados-y-lecciones-2018-2024/

Santiago Introduces High-Capacity Articulated E-Buses and Strengthens Regional Leadership

Santiago also introduced 94 new articulated electric buses, the first of their kind in South America, offering higher capacity (140 passengers) and improved comfort features such as air conditioning, security cameras, and Wi-Fi. Authorities emphasised that these advances position Chile as a regional leader and Santiago as the city with the largest electric-bus fleet outside China[8].

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[8] https://mtt.gob.cl/red-movilidad-consolida-la-electromovilidad-con-el-55-de-la-flota-electrica-en-santiago/?utm