

Ibagué, Colombia

Pilot Project

Completed

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

Ibague has 541,101 inhabitants of whom 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 Ibague 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, Ibague 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, Ibague's economy revolves around commerce, services, agriculture, and mining, generating products and services that add value.

Ibague's urban growth, especially in the outskirts, has created accessibility problems in the city's downtown and substantially increased travel times. 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 Ibague, of which 36% are for commuting, 25% for studying, 11% for personal errands, and the remaining 28% for shopping, accessing health care, 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 financial 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 to implement a sharing system for assisted pedalling bicycles in 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 environmental pollution from mobile sources and promote healthy lifestyles by increasing the modal share of bicycles over 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 to foster a social sense of the city by bringing together government agencies, economic associations, and citizens. INFIBAGUÉ will be responsible for implementing 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: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) through the EUROCLIMA+ Program

Local counterpart: Ibagué Municipality - INFIBAGUÉ

Finance leverage: EUR 195,000 approx. (ordinary budget from the 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 project implementation

Project start: 2019 Q2

Project completion: 2023 Q2

Completed outputs:

- Technical, legal, and financial structuring during the feasibility stage, and support for the tender process for system implementation.
- 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 the consultant's additional support (operational scheme options) in March 2023



Figure 1 Launch of the "Rueda por Ibagué" Public Bicycle Pilot (Ibagué, Colombia). Source: Gobierno de Ibagué



Figure 2 "Rueda por Ibagué" Public Bicycles Available in the City Center. Source: Gobierno de Ibagué

Insights from practice: key pilot project takeaways

A public bicycle pilot was needed because transport is the second-largest contributor to CO₂ emissions in Ibagué, and it supports transport decarbonisation while promoting healthy habits and offering alternatives for low-income people.

Given that the transport sector in Ibagué is the second-largest contributor to 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.

Public bicycle systems require a clear city steering structure from the project structuring stage, and a business model adapted to local conditions, ideally leveraging multiple funding sources to reach financial closure more easily.

Implementing public bicycle systems requires a clear and defined steering structure within the city. Implement this 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 leverage multiple funding sources to achieve financial closure more easily.

Results and perspectives for scaling

Ibagué's experience informs Colombia's National Guide for Public Bicycle Systems

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 Systems¹ 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 approach² - ENMA, also supported by EUROCLIMA+. This guide provides a step-by-step framework and recommendations for replicating and scaling up public bicycle systems in Colombia.

¹ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/euroclima_en

² https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/euroclima_en

Plans to expand the system in 2026³

In 2026, the Rueda por Ibagué public bike-sharing system is set to grow beyond its current configuration in response to how strongly residents embraced it in 2025. After concluding the planning and maintenance phase at the start of the year, Infibagué announced that the system, which closed 2025 with more than 7,500 trips and over 1,800 new users, will expand both its network of bike stations and its fleet of bicycles to better meet demand and further promote sustainable urban mobility. This planned growth reflects the positive reception from Ibagué's citizens and aligns with the city's goals of increasing access to eco-friendly transport options and reducing environmental impact.

Last updated December 2025

³ <https://www.infibague.gov.co/a-pedalear-se-dijo-este-martes-20-de-enero-regresa-el-sistema-publico-de-bicicletas-rueda-por-ibague>