

National Urban Mobility Policies and Investment Programmes in support of Climate Commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean

A snapshot by SLOCAT Partnership, EUROCLIMA+ Programme and MobiliseYourCity
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Photo: Scania

The importance of transport for climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean

The current transport demand trajectory in Latin America and the Caribbean points towards worsening congestion, greater pollution, and rising emissions. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the second most urbanised region in the world after Asia, with 81% of the population living in urban areas in 2019. This high urbanisation rate has led to a rising demand for transport. While public transport use remains high (averaging 68% of all passenger trips), people in the region rely heavily on private vehicles. Indeed, **the region is experiencing the highest growth in car ownership in the world**, up to 58% between 2005 and 2015, or more than twice the global average of 27%. As of 2015, nearly **one-third of countries in the region had car ownership rates above the global average** of 173 vehicles per 1,000 people. Furthermore, **around 70% of freight transport in LAC is delivered by trucks**, and regional freight demand (on land and sea) is expected to **more than double between 2015 and 2050**. Consequently, transport CO₂ emissions in the LAC region increased by 3% from 2010 to 2019, accounting for 31% of the region's total CO₂ emissions and 8% of total global emissions in 2019. **In two-thirds of LAC countries, the growth in transport CO₂ emissions exceeded the global average of 16%** (Figure 1).¹

As of 10 April 2022, 24 LAC countries had submitted second generation Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and six LAC countries had submitted Long-Term Strategies (LTS). Within them, all these **LAC countries have identified transport as an important area to achieve their climate goals**. Most importantly, the number of transport measures proposed in regional NDCs has increased over the years.²

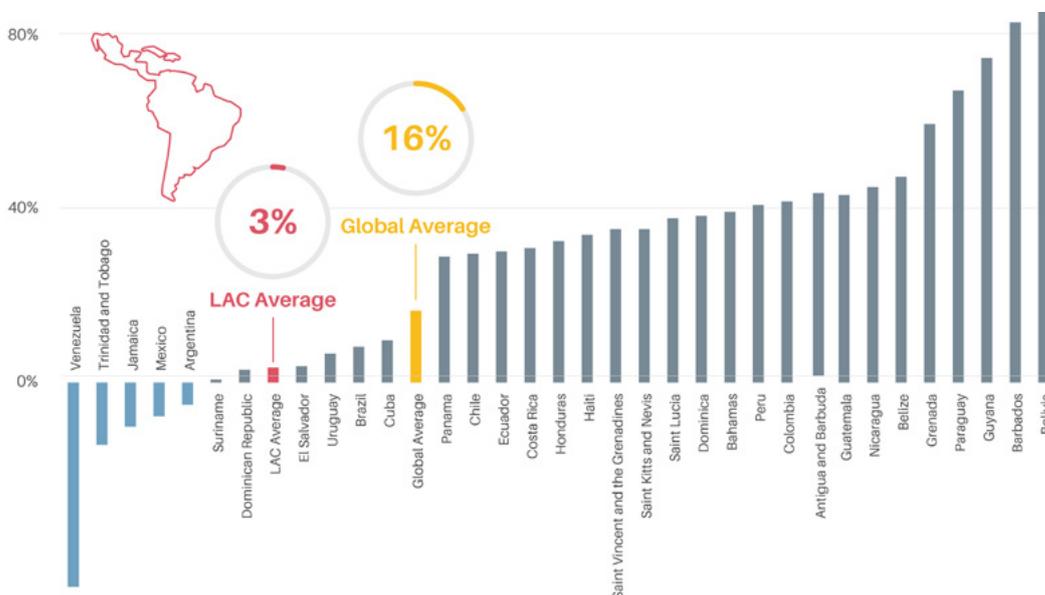


Figure 1. Change in transport CO₂ emissions in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010-2019



Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-Term Strategies

Under the Paris Agreement, Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are required to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), or frameworks and strategies outlining their specific targets and actions to reduce emissions. NDCs communicate planned mitigation and adaptation actions by the Parties, including plans to achieve resilient, low carbon transport systems. NDCs are submitted in a five-year cycle, with the first generation of NDCs submitted during 2015 and 2016. Parties to the UNFCCC were requested to submit second generation NDCs by the end of 2020, according to the established five-year cycle. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNFCCC extended the timeline for Parties to submit second-generation NDCs until nine to 12 months before the UN Climate Change Conference COP26. To complement the NDCs, the Paris Agreement invites (but does not require) Parties to formulate and communicate Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies. These strategies establish low carbon trajectories to 2050.



NUMPs as a strategy to integrate global commitments with national and local planning

Urban mobility is not only a local concern but also an issue of national concern to combat climate change. Cities are primarily responsible for implementing sustainable urban mobility measures and local action is essential for NDCs and LTS to go beyond formal commitments at the national level. However, **many local governments have limited authority and resources for sustainable urban mobility planning**. To overcome this, **national authorities should develop plans and policies to support local governments in planning and implementing sustainable urban mobility strategies, and to guarantee coherence between climate commitments and subnational transport planning**.

Despite most countries having national regulations on transport planning in place, these do not always provide a clear vision for the development of sustainable urban transport, nor fit the particular needs of cities. An analysis carried out by SLOCAT³ compared the transport content of the commitments expressed by the NDCs and LTSs of seven countries (Barbados, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay) in the LAC region on the one hand; with the transport content of their national and subnational planning instruments, on the other. Although coherence between the different levels exists in most countries, the analysis also finds cases in which the measures proposed at the national and subnational levels differ among themselves and with the climate commitments. In addition, the analysis highlights that only four of these countries have national policies or plans on transport and urban mobility, whereas the other three countries include transport measures in broader plans about strategic development, territorial development, or energy. Similarly, only the largest cities of the sampled countries have sustainable urban mobility plans in place or include the topic in other plans. This scenario highlights the need for national governments to develop planning tools to guide cities of different sizes and circumstances in the planning and implementing of sustainable urban mobility.

Several LAC countries have recognised the importance of supporting the work of their cities on urban mobility through adequate national regulatory frameworks and financial instruments. Although not yet widespread, **dedicated National Urban Mobility Policies and Investment Programmes (NUMPs) are growing in prominence** in the LAC region as effective planning instruments to bridge this gap and enable local governments to enhance urban transport and mobility.



National Urban Mobility Policies and Investment Programmes (NUMPs)

A NUMP is a strategic, action-oriented framework for urban mobility, developed by national governments; that is enacted to enhance the capability of cities to plan, finance and implement projects and measures designed to fulfil the mobility needs of people and businesses in cities and their surroundings in a sustainable manner.

A NUMP builds on existing policies and regulations and aims at harmonising relevant laws, norms, sector strategies, investment and support programs towards an integrated approach for the benefits of cities and their inhabitants, taking into consideration participation and evaluation principles.⁴ A comprehensive NUMP provides a robust, coordinated and multi-level framework that serves as a reference for cities to develop actions and ensures that mobility is consistently planned at different levels.⁵

There exist three different types of NUMPs: policies, programmes and a mix of both. They all aim at a paradigm shift in policy making by emphasising the central role of national governments regarding urban mobility and do complement the natural role of cities and local authorities. A policy sets targets, establishes a framework and allocates authorities and means to national institutions or city administrations to regulate, plan, finance and implement sustainable urban mobility measures and transport infrastructure in an integrated manner. A programme establishes regulatory and financial frameworks leading to significant transformation effects in sustainable urban mobility through the development of selected transport modes or topics by the public or private sector.⁶

One of the guiding principles of NUMPs is the contribution to international commitments, which encourages the linkage between sustainable urban mobility measures and their GHG emission reduction potential, connecting sustainable urban mobility strategies with international commitments and funding opportunities. **NUMPs are tools for countries to link NDC and LTS ambition with locally appropriate action, aligning efforts to deliver on international climate change commitments.** Reflecting the commitments of NDCs in NUMPs, and vice versa, can amplify transformative action on sustainable urban mobility.

NUMPs in Latin America and the Caribbean

In recent years, some countries in the region started developing their NUMPs supported by international cooperation initiatives such as the **EUROCLIMA+ programme** and the **MobiliseYourCity Partnership**. These NUMPs recognise the critical role that horizontal and vertical coordination plays in overcoming key barriers to sustainable mobility, and the importance of developing implementation instruments to complement them. The following case studies of Chile, Colombia and Uruguay describe national transport policies that are aligned with these countries' climate ambition and have been developed with support from the EUROCLIMA+ programme and MobiliseYourCity's methodology.



Case Study - Chile

In Chile, the transport sector contributes around 31% of the country's total CO₂ emissions⁷ and evidence indicates that at least half of transport's emissions are produced in urban areas.⁸ Until recently, due to a highly centralised system, Chilean cities had very few competencies for planning sustainable urban mobility. Through the recent decentralisation process underway, cities will receive new powers in this area. To support this process, Chile's Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications (MTT) started implementing a National Urban Mobility Policy (NUMP), with the goal of providing cities and regions a general enabling multi sectoral framework for developing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans; as well as technical guidance on transport emissions reduction.⁹

Chile's NUMP has two complementary components. On the one hand, the **National Sustainable Mobility Strategy (ENMS)**, launched in 2021 and available to subnational governments, is the first policy instrument in the Chilean transport sector to directly establish strategic guidelines in the interface between transport and climate action. The strategy establishes a vision for urban mobility by 2050 with seven objectives and a set of 30 illustrative measures to possibly develop at the local level in coordination with the national level. It also recommends measures with different levels of impact and difficulty so that each city can generate its own local strategies aligned with the ENMS. The Chilean Ministries of Housing and Urbanism, Public Works, Social Development and Family, Energy and Environment, as well as the Undersecretary of Regional Development contributed to its conceptualisation. The strategy is linked to other instruments previously developed by the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications and by other ministries, like the National Urban Development Policy and the Electromobility Strategy.¹⁰ On the other hand, the **National Sustainable Urban Mobility Program** will be the main public instrument from the central government to facilitate the financing of the measures contemplated in ENMS. This program has been under development throughout 2022.¹¹



Case Study - Colombia

The transport sector is responsible for approximately 35.5% of CO₂ emissions in Colombia.¹² To counter this, the Ministry of Transport formulated the [National Strategy of Active Mobility with a Gender and Differential Approach \(ENMA\)](#), with the aim of promoting walking and cycling as options to reduce car dependency and fight climate change, while considering the needs of people with reduced mobility and disabilities and promoting gender equality.¹³ The strategy defines lines of work in terms of territorial planning, infrastructure, governance schemes, regulatory and financing instruments, and behaviour transformation.¹⁴ The strategy presents a series of actions and identifies responsibilities at the national and sub-national levels, recognising the role of other entities such as the ministries of Health and Social Protection; Sports; National Education; Environment and Sustainable Development; and Housing, City and Territory; as well as the National Planning Department and the National Road Safety Agency.¹⁵

The strategy is complemented for implementation with a [Guide for Shared Bicycle Systems](#), which promotes the evaluation of technical, regulatory, and financial aspects for the implementation of this type of systems in cities. The guide seeks to reflect the diversity of experiences; capturing the complexity and depth of aspects developed in various planning and implementation processes, in order to provide practical guidance to large and small cities.¹⁶



Case Study - Uruguay

In Uruguay, transport is the largest emitter of CO₂, representing around 51% of its total CO₂ emissions.¹⁷ Despite the existence of diverse public policies promoting sustainable mobility, the development and implementation of a NUMP was identified as a strategic process at the national level to coordinate efforts. This process was jointly led by the ministries of Environment; Economy and Finance; Industry, Energy and Mining; Transport and Public Works, and Housing and Territorial Planning.

With the goal of strengthening capacities at the national and subnational levels in planning sustainable urban mobility, the process included the development of technical, regulatory, and financial instruments to facilitate the implementation of sustainable urban mobility measures in Uruguayan cities. To this end, the NUMP and two implementation guides for municipal authorities were developed.

The National Policy on Sustainable Urban Mobility is an ambitious people-centred and multi-sectoral policy that highlights the role of urban mobility to achieve sustainable development and that aims to capture the complex reality of the country. It is founded on a bottom-up approach initiated by gathering feedback from Uruguayan cities on how national policy could support their efforts to advance sustainable mobility.¹⁸

Complementing the NUMP, the [Guide for Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning in Uruguay](#) (2021) seeks to provide technicians in subnational governments with tools for planning and implementing sustainable urban mobility strategies, and to promote comprehensive urban development and mobility planning. The guide details the context of mobility in Uruguay, includes sustainable mobility concepts, describes the planning process, and suggests a broad set of measures with guidelines and recommendations for planning, design, and implementation.¹⁹ Also, the [Guide for Electric Urban Mobility in Uruguay](#) (2022) presents options for the promotion of electric mobility, by systematising the state of the art of electric urban mobility for freight and passengers and providing recommendations for promotion and implementation by local governments in Uruguay.²⁰

Conclusion

In the LAC region, most measures required to decarbonise transport must be implemented in urban areas, putting cities at the forefront of climate action. NUMPs can be a major support mechanism for climate action on transport, coordinating and enabling multi-level efforts. The LAC region has started to showcase good examples of national policy frameworks that allow efficient horizontal coordination across ministerial departments and effective support from the national to the subnational level. These policy efforts can serve as a source of inspiration for other countries. Therefore, it is essential to disseminate them and support peer-learning on NUMP design and implementation in order to keep extending the positive footprint of these good planning practices in the region.

About the SLOCAT Partnership | www.slocat.net

SLOCAT is the international multi-stakeholder partnership that enables collaborative knowledge and action for sustainable, low carbon transport and brings the voice of the movement into international climate change and sustainability processes. With a primary focus on land transport, and a geographic footprint targeted at the Global South; we deliver on our mission through three mutually-reinforcing work streams; namely knowledge and policy analysis; advocacy and engagement, and dialogue and networking. Our Partnership engages a vibrant international, multi-stakeholder ecosystem of over 90 entities across transport sectors associations, knowledge and academia, governments, multilateral organisations, NGOs, philanthropy and industry; as well as a large community of world-class experts and change-makers. By going there where others do not or cannot go individually, our inclusive, multi-stakeholder Partnership is leveraged to set ambitious global agendas and catalyse new thinking and solutions for the urgent transformation of mobility system.



About the EUROCLIMA+ Programme | www.euroclima.com

EUROCLIMA+ is the EU flagship cooperation programme on environmental sustainability and climate change with the Latin American region. Its objective is to reduce the impact of climate change and its effects in Latin America by fostering climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience and investment. Its Urban Mobility sector supports the transition of Latin American cities towards sustainable urban mobility through 19 projects in 12 countries. It is promoted by two implementing agencies: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD).



About the MobiliseYourCity Partnership | www.mobiliseyourcity.net

The MobiliseYourCity Partnership is a partnership under the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action for integrated urban mobility planning in emerging and developing countries as well as the EU Neighbourhood. The MobiliseYourCity Partnership supports and engages local and national partner governments in improving urban mobility planning, policy and finance by providing a methodological framework and technical assistance, through capacity building; and by enabling access to funding at both local and national levels. MobiliseYourCity has been a leading force in disseminating SUMP and NUMPs in the Global South since its inception in 2016. As of 2022, 66 cities and 15 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America are collaborating closely with the MobiliseYourCity Partnership to develop scalable solutions for improving mobility in complex environments. At the time of this publication, 32 SUMP are being developed and/or implemented with assistance from AFD, GIZ, Codatu, ADB, Cerema and the Wuppertal Institute. The MobiliseYourCity contributing partners have mobilised 40 million euros in grant financing to support our member cities and countries in advancing sustainable urban mobility. Our main implementing partners, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), is supporting 24 SUMP and 3 NUMPs, and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is supporting 8 SUMP and 7 NUMPs (including 3 NUMPs and 2 SUMP in non-member countries and cities).

Endnotes

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- 2 SLOCAT (2022). [Climate Strategies for Transport in Latin America and the Caribbean.](#)
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- 4 MobiliseYourCity. [National Urban Mobility Policies and Investment Programmes \(NUMPs\) Factsheet.](#)
- 5 MobiliseYourCity. [National Urban Mobility Policies and Investment Programmes Guidelines.](#)
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- 7 GIZ y SLOCAT (2022). [Tracker of Climate Strategies for Transport - Chile.](#)
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- 19 Programa EUROCLIMA+, proyecto NUMP Uruguay (2021). [Guía para la planificación de la movilidad urbana sostenible en Uruguay.](#)
- 20 Programa EUROCLIMA+, proyecto NUMP Uruguay (2021). [Guía sobre Movilidad Urbana Eléctrica en Uruguay.](#)