

## Group takes aim at gridlock to lure more private investment into CO2 reductions

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Faced with increasing urbanization, traffic gridlock and worsening air quality, decisionmakers from Colombia decided to take a page out of Washington, D.C.'s book of urban development.

Colombia has a robust and expanding public transportation network. But as the country's economy has grown, so too has motorization, clogging city roads and people's airways. Looking to counter this trend, public transit managers, environmental officials and Colombia's secretary of transportation traveled to Columbia Heights in Washington last year to learn about transit-oriented development (TOD) neighborhoods.

"They were really surprised because they have this great transit system [at home], but their stations are all two-story buildings. There's no development around the stations; they just have stations," said Ned Helme, president of the Center for Clean Air Policy, an international environmental think tank. "They hadn't thought about it as a way to focus housing, jobs, restaurants and do the sort of smart growth we do in D.C., Virginia and Maryland."

To help Colombia develop communities like Columbia Heights, the NAMA Facility, a partnership between Germany and the United Kingdom, announced \$20 million in funding for TOD neighborhoods Friday at the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change's 19th annual conference in Warsaw, Poland. The funds are intended to leverage private-sector dollars to build transportation projects in Colombia that slow growth in car traffic by up to 36 percent, while simultaneously reducing air pollution.

Support for the transit hubs is one of four three-year funding announcements the NAMA Facility made last week. These projects will be among the first examples of a new policy tool called Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, or NAMAs. The idea behind these actions is to tailor climate protection measures to meet a specific country's development needs.

Reducing greenhouse gases is not always a top priority for developing countries facing local pollution, health and social issues, Helme said. The purpose of NAMAs is to foster a paradigm shift that will change the way a country does business so combating climate change is part of a bottom-up development agenda.

### Unsnarling traffic and its footprint

"The idea here is you're mainstreaming climate into development and poverty reduction and health protection," he said. "You're optimizing for both greenhouse gases and to address these other ills."

Helme added he thinks it's likely the NAMA model will be used to dispense portions of the \$100 billion governments pledged to the U.N. Green Climate Fund to combat the effects of climate change.

In Colombia, improving the transportation network is intimately tied to fighting climate change.

In the last 50 years, the number of people who live in urban areas in Colombia increased from 4 to 5 percent up to 75 percent, according to Juan Sanclemente, adviser to the Colombian Ministry of Transport. To accommodate this growth, the government has poured \$9 billion into housing and public transportation over the last decade.

Today, Colombia has eight cities with mass transit options and about 120 miles of bus corridors that serve 2.5 million passengers per day. But while these are impressive numbers, Sanclemente says car ownership is still on the rise. The total number of vehicles in the country, including cars, buses, trucks and motorcycles, has increased by about 70 percent in the last five years, he said.

"We don't have any problem with people owning cars; what we want to control is how much people use cars and what they use them for," he said. "So in this really quick transformation of the country, and despite all the efforts of the national government to incentivize public transport, in cities we've realized just providing the infrastructure is not enough. Currently, we still have increasing numbers for vehicles in Colombia."

He added: "The country has a very long tradition with public transit initiatives. We really want to take this up to the next level, and we believe the TOD NAMA is an excellent opportunity."

### **Other greenhouse gas reduction efforts**

One of the proposed projects is in the Colombian city of Cali, which plans to convert a strip of unused railway into a green corridor. The hub will accommodate walking, biking and a mass transit line that will serve nearby neighborhoods. Another initiative is to build the first metro line in the city of Bogota, which will be the second metro line in the country and the only one built underground.

By 2040, the TOD NAMA projects are expected to reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions in Colombia by up to 5.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide.

Among the other NAMAs announced last week was a project in Costa Rica to implement climate protection measures in the coffee sector, which accounts for 10 percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

The nearly \$9.5 million in project support may attract private-sector investment by providing loans and grants for farmers to buy low-carbon fertilizers and milling technologies. Overall, the project has the potential to cut 1.85 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent over 20 years. NAMA support is expected to be directly responsible for 250,000 tons of carbon-dioxide-equivalent reductions.

In Chile, the NAMA Support Project will deliver just more than \$20 million in financing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the expansion of distributed renewable energy systems. The funding will help small and medium-sized businesses conduct feasibility studies, install these systems and help set up training services to support the industry. It's estimated this NAMA project will directly reduce emissions by 2 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The fourth NAMA will support Indonesia's Sustainable Urban Transport Program by co-funding transport demand management measures, including sidewalks, bicycle paths and "park and ride" facilities.