

## Urban development – Colombia

Compact spaces, shorter pathways

Proportionally, more people live in cities in Latin America than anywhere else in the world. Overall, between 80 and 90 % of its population now lives in urban centres. It is not only megacities like Mexico City or Rio de Janeiro that are facing tremendous challenges associated with the growing pace of urbanisation; officials in many smaller towns and cities also face similar issues: insufficient housing, too much traffic, long distances, long transport times, poor air quality. To address these problems, Colombia has opted for a new course of action with the support of KfW Development Bank. Instead of merely allowing towns and cities to continue to grow unregulated and build new districts and roads, neighbourhoods are being compacted and designed in a way that allows them to be used for a mix of purposes. They could be a model for many other urban centres in Colombia and Latin America.

### Context

The global trend of urbanisation is also omnipresent in Colombia. Around 75 % of Colombians live in towns and cities, a number that is further increasing. This development is causing problems for the country, just as in other countries all over the world. Cities are being congested by traffic and are suffering from environmental pollution and a lack of affordable housing. Furthermore, city boundaries are often allowed to expand at an uncontrolled rate, leading to the constant creation of new peripheral districts while an increasing amount of abandoned or unused space in city centres is left behind. In terms of urban planning, there is a greater need for infrastructure as a result of this decentralised growth. But the demand can rarely be sufficiently met.

As a consequence, the amount of individual motorised transport in Colombia will increase, with devastating implications for the climate and the general quality of life. To counteract this trend while still capitalising on the economic possibilities of urbanisation, KfW is promoting a transition to traffic-oriented urban planning, in consultation with the Colombian development bank FINDETER S.A. and the think tank CCAP.

Foremost, transit-oriented development, or TOD for short, promises to shorten distances and commutes, but also to reduce greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change by altering mobility patterns. In other cities, including in Brazil, TOD has already low-

<b>Project name</b>	Transit-oriented urban development in Colombia
<b>Commissioned by</b>	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) British government
<b>Country/Region</b>	Colombia
<b>Lead executing agency</b>	FINDETER





Congested roads will become attractive thanks to innovative urban planning. Source: KfW photo archive, photographer: Auslöser-Photographie.

ered the volume of traffic by 20 to 40 %, because urban planning was geared towards non-motorised and public transport.

### Project approach

KfW Development Bank supports FINDETER in the form of grants totalling EUR 11.7 million from the NAMA Facility. FINDETER is using these funds to create a credit line for Colombian pilot cities that want to pursue urban development consistent with TOD in certain districts. All financing comprises a loan and a grant component. However, FINDETER is much more than a financier; the bank also acts as an advisor and a lawyer for sustainable urban planning. Employees will, for instance, train city councils to integrate TOD into their long term planning for the model district and beyond.

The model districts are initially to be created in the four medium-sized cities of Cali, Manizales, Montería and Pasto. Plans for the transformation of these cities are currently developed. However, the project partners are not just prepared to help financially, but also offer technical assistance. They support city planners from the initial ideas all the way through to the structural implementation. The objective is to develop an overall concept which combines traffic planning and land use in a sustainable manner and therefore improves the quality of life. The emphasis is always on compacting spaces because these lead to less traffic. To achieve this, the remodelled districts must not only offer housing but also spaces to work, go shopping and spend free time. This shortens the journeys made by residents in their day-to-day lives. Ideally, residents should be able to make these journeys on foot or by bike. For longer distances, TOD concepts envisage that public transport can be

reached on foot. The first structural changes will be implemented in early 2019, with the initial focus placed on strengthening non-motorised transportation with cycle paths and pedestrian zones. Larger measures will be implemented later, such as linking up with existing public transportation networks, the creation of parks and green spaces and the construction of office blocks and shopping facilities in integrated commercial spaces. Targeted initial investments should also provide incentives for investments from the private sector for such districts undergoing transformation. In this way, the positive effects of transit-oriented urban development are multiplied over the long term, while the economy is simultaneously provided with the impetus for sustainable growth.

### Impact

The compacted districts create attractive housing and increase the quality of life for residents. Shortened journeys and less motorised transport reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and nitrogen oxides which improves the air in built-up areas. TOD also brings with it even more advantages in the medium term, such as lower expenses for households and companies, the establishment of new businesses, fewer accidents, the preservation of nature and better social inclusion. In addition, the involved parties hope that other cities will recognise the opportunities offered by TOD concepts and that urban development changes fundamentally as a result.



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