



**United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) through the project ACCESS:
Accelerating Access to Low Carbon Urban Mobility Solutions through Digitalization**

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for universities and NGOs in Argentina and Ecuador

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Deadline for submissions of EOIs: 16 June 2025

1. Introduction

Accelerating Access to Low Carbon Urban Mobility Solutions (ACCESS) through Digitalization is a joint project of nine organisations (UN Environment Programme - UNEP; Institute of Transportation and Development Policy - ITDP, Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy; UN Development Programme - UNDP; UN Human Settlements Programme - UN-Habitat, Local Governments for Sustainability - ICLEI, Urban Electric Mobility Initiative, Massachusetts Institute of Technology - MIT; and Centro de Movilidad Sostenible - CMS) supporting six countries in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru). The project's goal is to introduce digitalization policies and tools into urban transport systems in order to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the transport sector. Planned measures are:

1. Developing national policies to enable digitalisation of mobility
2. Developing local policies and implementing pilots at city level
3. Documenting and curating lessons, knowledge, data in order to develop tools and resources to be shared at regional level through capacity building and replication.

The project is transformative and will benefit citizens in each country who use urban transport by providing more efficient low carbon transport options and in the longer term healthier and cleaner environments, as well as benefiting national and city government stakeholders and the private sector.

Potential digitalization interventions have been discussed and identified in collaboration with the countries for demonstration projects during the project preparation phase in 2022, including urban freight and logistics, electric mobility uptake, public transport, walking and cycling, transportation demand management, clean and more efficient vehicles, and vehicle operation monitoring. ACCESS will conduct in-depth country and city baseline assessments and stakeholder engagement to assess the current context, opportunities, and challenges for sustainable mobility and digitalization, examining the local needs and context. Tailored solutions will be designed, finalized, and implemented for each city and will be designed to allow replicability in other cities and countries in the region through a strong regional component (via the work package on the Regional Resource Centre & Upscaling).

2. Geographic Scope

The ACCESS project will work with the six project countries to undertake the preparation phase activities at city, country, and regional levels. The selected cities identified for the countries are:

- Argentina: Buenos Aires
- Brazil: Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte
- Colombia: Bogota and Medellin
- Ecuador: Quito
- Mexico: Monterrey and Mexico City
- Peru: Lima-Callao

These locations represent some of the highest GHG emissions from the transport sector in the region, reflecting a variety of sizes and socio-economic contexts useful for demonstrating the broad applicability of the proposed solutions. All have demonstrated political will and alignment with the project goals.

This Call for EoI, however, focuses on the activities to be conducted in **Argentina and Ecuador**.

3. Country and City Details

3.1 Argentina

The Argentinian Government views the strengthening of digital government as a key pillar of its national reform agenda and has developed a Digital Agenda to provide a unified vision and roadmap for the country's digital transformation, enhancing productivity and competitiveness. Digitalizing mobility can underscore the importance of digitalization for data-driven action. The National Forest and Climate Change Action Plan (2017) demonstrates Argentina's commitment to utilizing information for climate action and transparency, and it aims to centralize climate-relevant data on a publicly accessible digital platform.

Buenos Aires, the political and economic capital of Argentina, is the most populated city in the country with 3 million residents and an estimated 3 million daily visitors. It accounts for 83% of the gross regional product and hosts over 50% of Argentina's export services. In May 2021, Buenos Aires released its Climate Action Plan 2050, aiming to reduce emissions by 53% by 2030 and 84% by 2050, following earlier plans from 2009 and 2015. Identified digitalization transport gaps and needs for project intervention include the significant contribution of road freight to transport GHG emissions, estimated to be half of the national road transport emissions. The growth of freight demand, particularly e-commerce, and the lack of concerted efforts to address sustainability in urban freight, highlight the sector's need for digitalization. The complex and fragmented institutional structures, along with intricate movements and types of loads, contribute to significant data gaps.

Planned ACCESS Interventions in Argentina

The ACCESS project will focus on digitizing urban freight by piloting data generation activities and instruments (e.g., hardware, data platforms) to enable users and service providers to generate standardized core data on urban freight demand, supply, and movements. This data could support the development of a sustainable urban freight plan or a policy on open data for sustainable urban logistics. A national policy to accelerate freight digitalization could also be pursued, with national-level policies and guidance enabling replication. Similar concepts can be explored for passenger transport, supporting digitalization to better understand and accelerate the shift from personal motorized modes to sustainable ones, particularly through improved understanding of movements, patterns, and behaviour. The ACCESS project aims to foster critical thinking on sustainability issues, such as urban freight digitalization, by utilizing data to inform the integration of freight into sustainable mobility plans, planning for multi-modal facilities, and considering geo-spatial limitations for last-mile distribution using non-motorized or electric vehicles. It seeks to improve system efficiency through shared services provision and management of loading and unloading areas, addressing institutional, policy, and technological barriers and opportunities.

In particular, the following pilots are planned to be implemented in Argentina:

- Courier Fleet tracking and dynamic routing / route planning enabling higher operational standards and lower GHG emissions;
- Digital tools for reservation, management and fiscalization of loading and unloading areas within the city parking structure (Urban Logistics - “blue boxes”) in Buenos Aires;
- Origin-Destination Matrix analysis/dashboard considering gender responsiveness and exploiting SUBE system data and information from other MaaS platforms for evidence-based public policy.

At the national level, a policy to improve freight sector visibility would support systemic efficiencies in inter- and intra-regional movements, contributing to national sustainable urban freight planning. The insights gained from pilot activities could aid policy development and the dissemination of successful practices. In passenger transport, the ACCESS Project can inform policymaking and planning for integrated and sustainable mobility, emphasizing the need for institutional and policy improvements supported by data. Efforts to establish a functioning Metropolitan Transit Authority in Buenos Aires have faced challenges, but digitalization could enable coordination among transport stakeholders through functions like fare collection and distribution, data repositories, data analysis, and integrated transport planning and routing. Digital modernization of urban transport systems holds significant potential for transforming urban services and improving overall liveability in Argentina. Strategic interventions in the urban freight sector, driven by data and analysis, can deliver transformative benefits to urban areas across the country.

3.2 Ecuador

To provide modern and efficient public transport options, the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito has constructed several BRT lines. Quito implemented its first BRT line in 1995, becoming the second city in Latin America to have such a system. Currently, the BRT system consists of five lines, one of which uses trolleybuses. Covering 136 km with exclusive lanes, the system completes 1 million trips daily. However, it has reached capacity, with 38% of the total BRT fleet being older than 15 years. Additionally, there are 2,380 diesel buses operated by 65 different private operators, conducting 1.6 million trips on a regular working day. This situation has led to an increase in the use of private cars in recent years. Consequently, in 2010, the Municipality of Quito decided to build the first subway line, which was inaugurated in 2023. The Metro, an investment of USD 2 billion, is intended to become the backbone of the public transport system. Moreover, since the pandemic, delivery services in Quito, like in many other cities worldwide, experienced exponential growth. According to the Ecuadorian

Chamber of e-Commerce, online shopping increased 15 times since the first lockdown started. Businesses were forced to quickly digitalize their operations, including delivery, enabling consumers to become familiar with using digital platforms for purchasing, paying, and receiving goods and services.

Planned ACCESS Interventions in Ecuador

Despite progress in policies and laws for transitioning to low-carbon mobility in both the transport and freight sectors at the national level, implementation remains a significant challenge. Moreover, the linkage between transport and digitalization policies is not clear in official documents. For instance, the national agenda on digitalization does not mention transport at all. At the local level, Quito needs to restructure and modernize its entire public transport system to stop the shift towards private transport and ensure adequate ridership levels for the subway, thus maintaining its financial viability. Digitalization will play a crucial role by enabling the physical and tariff integration of all public transport subsystems, including the BRT lines, the subway, and the 65 private PTOs. Further development of the route planner, an integrated payment system, and integration with last-mile connectivity modes will be key.

In terms of logistics, the successful implementation of a ZEZ in Quito will pave the way for replicating such zones citywide and provide the necessary elements for applying this model in other cities in the country and the region. However, the success of this pilot depends on a complex operations system that integrates all potential users and service providers on one platform, which requires a robust digital solution.

In particular, the following pilots will be implemented:

- Planning & design: transport optimization and AQ models to support mobility planning and electrification in Quito
- Performance management & monitoring: Data platform for the last-mile logistics pilot (cross-docking hub) in the Historic Center of Quito
- Payment and traveler information services: Multi-modal integration building on a gender-inclusive MaaS concept and the Integrated Payment System (SIR) being implemented in Quito

The ACCESS project will support the national government of Ecuador and the municipal government of Quito by building capacity and raising awareness about the importance of digitalization in the transport sector. It will identify and bring together all relevant stakeholders (national and local government, private sector, and academia) to advance the digitalization of transport. Additionally, the project will work with local authorities in Quito, academia, and private actors to ensure that digitalization is used to optimize transport options.

4. Objectives of the Call for Proposals

UN-Habitat invites Expressions of Interest from universities and NGOs based in Argentina and Ecuador to support the implementation of the ACCESS activities in the respective countries. In particular, the following activities shall be carried out by the selected institutions:

Argentina

- Identify and validate the characteristics of the urban logistics tools to be developed for Buenos Aires, i.e., 1) courier fleet tracking and dynamic routing and 2) digital tools for reservation, management and control of loading and unloading areas by:
 - o Reviewing and systematizing international case studies with a focus on regional experiences.

- o Analysing the legal, financial, economic and social feasibility of implementing the tools.
- o Defining and validating the characteristics of the tools with key stakeholders;
- o Elaborating the terms of reference for the development of the tools
- o Identifying potential technology providers for the development of the tools
- Develop a methodology for the Urban Logistics Carbon Footprint calculation that could be linked, if possible, in the above-mentioned tools.

Ecuador

- Contribute to the development of transport optimization and AQ models to support decision makers in Quito by:
 - o Developing a model and tool for fleet allocation of Quito's BRT feeder system to be later scaled up to the Trolebús and Ecovía BRT corridors in close collaboration with the municipal PTO.
 - o Preparation, parametrization and calibration of the air quality model aligned to the needs of the Air Quality Monitoring Unit of the Municipality of Quito.
 - o The models must be compatible with all relevant operating systems, ensuring that input data will be available and therefore can be integrated into the municipal systems.
 - o Define the relevant KPIs to monitor the impact of the implemented models in their pilot and scaled up form.
- Contribute to the LML logistics pilots being implemented in Quito by:
 - o Developing and initial proposal of the operational and business models for the collaborative cross-docking hub to be implemented in the Historic Center in the context of the E-MOVILIZA (GEF-7) project that could be replicated in other areas of Quito.
 - o Reviewing and systematizing international case studies of collaborative cross-docking platforms / micro-hubs with a focus on the business and operational models, as well as the technological aspects included, mainly in regional case studies.
 - o Identifying the technological needs for the continuation, scale-up and replication of the cross-docking platform / micro-hub implemented in the HCQ.

5. Proposal Submission Guidelines

The EOI should contain, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Overall experience of the non-for-profit organization (university/NGO) / consortium in the areas of transport and mobility, digitalisation, e-mobility, and other relevant topics in the specific country
- ii. A short conceptual proposal on how the non-for-profit organization / consortium plans to develop and implement the activities detailed in Section 4 in the specific country
- iii. Governance and organizational structure; experience and qualifications of key professional staff and infrastructure facilities of the organization / consortium
- iv. Details of the organization / consortium financial and in-kind contributions, including staff time, office space and equipment and other support in cash and in-kind should be expressed in monetary terms.
- v. Certificate of Registration in the country of implementation of the project
- vi. Copy of two latest audited reports
- vii. Last two annual reports

Structure of the application:

Kindly use the structure provided below for your proposal to ensure that the important aspects of your planned work are presented in a way that will enable the experts to make an effective assessment against the evaluation criteria.

Section 1: About the Institution/s

- 1.1 Contact information (name, address, e-mail, contact person, website)
- 1.2 Institutional profile
- 1.3 Consortium structure (for consortium proposals only)
- 1.4 Related projects and experience with the topics listed in sections 3 and 4
- 2.5 Experience and qualifications of key staff

Section 2: Project proposal

- 3.1 Background and problem statement in the city of implementation
- 3.2 Approach and methodology
- 3.3 Activities and deliverables
- 3.4 Timeline
- 3.5 Budget (Including university's/NGOs financial and in-kind contributions expressed in monetary terms (e.g.: staff time, office space, equipment, etc.)

The proposal should not exceed 10 pages and be submitted in pdf format together with:

- Certificate of registration in the country of implementation of the project
- Last two annual reports
- Copy of two latest audited reports

Evaluation criteria:

The project proposal will be assessed through the following criteria and weights

Criterium	Weight
Experience and capacity of the organization / consortium in the topic of the call	30%
Technical feasibility of the proposal	40%
Financial feasibility of the proposal	30%

Submission:

Expression of Interest must be delivered by email no later than 16 June 2025 to unhabitat.ubss.eoi@un.org, in copy to ximena.machegorosado@un.org with the reference "ACCESS Implementation Partner Universities and NGOs" in the subject of your email. Failure to indicate the reference may result in your proposal not being considered.

Contact Information:

For any questions related to the application please write to:

Ms. Ximena Manchego Rosado (ximena.machegorosado@un.org)
Urban Basic Services Section – Urban Mobility
UN-Habitat, Nairobi, Kenya

6. Budget and Timeline

Funding: UN-Habitat will contribute financial resources up to USD 20,000 (Twenty Thousand United States Dollars) per country. The EOI shall make reference to counter-part contributions (cash and in-kind) of the applying entity.

Project Duration: The work outlined in this EOI is scheduled to commence by 1 July 2025 and to be completed by December 2025.

7. Disclaimer

Please note that this EOI notice does not constitute a solicitation. UN-Habitat reserves the right to change or cancel this requirement at any time in the Expressions of Interest/or solicitation process. Submitting a reply to an EOI does not guarantee that a Cooperation Partner will be considered for receipt of the solicitation when issued and only Cooperation Partners who are deemed qualified by UN-Habitat upon completion of evaluation of submission, will receive the final solicitation document.