



THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY GROUP FOR TRANSPORTATION: A STRONG POLITICAL COMMITMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT IN URUGUAY

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ACTION AREA: Mitigation

FOCUS AREA: Engaging

COUNTRY: Uruguay

SECTORS

INVOLVED: Transport, Energy (Efficiency)

TIMEFRAME: 2014 - present

CASE SUMMARY: For over a decade, Uruguay has achieved a dynamic economic development reflected in the growth of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while maintaining emissions almost constant and even reducing the intensity of emissions in some sectors, such as power generation. Uruguay's sustainable development is made possible as a result of a strong political will to integrate climate change into the different areas of public policy and the involvement of multiple sectors of the economy and the society, both at national and subnational levels (Uruguay, 2016).

That strength is clearly reflected in the initiatives implemented in the transport sector, which shows growing economic activity. The transport sector is the second sector in terms of energy consumption and the first in terms of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the country. Reducing the carbon footprint in this sector requires multiple well-planned and coordinated mitigation initiatives, as part of a major and substantial transformation of the energy sector. This transformation is led by several ministries: the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM by its acronym in Spanish), Ministry of Housing, Land Planning and Environment (Mvotma), Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTOPE). Energy efficiency measures are immediate instruments that can reduce fossil fuel consumption (CEPAL, 2015). And these were the first ones to be approached in Uruguay.

The Interinstitutional Transport Energy Efficiency Group (ITEEG) was formed in 2014 with the leadership of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining and has the participation of seven public institutions:

- the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM)
- the Ministry of Housing, Land-Use Planning and Environment (MVOTMA)
- the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)
- the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTOPE)
- the Uruguayan state electric utility (UTE)
- the Montevideo Intendance (IM)
- the National Administration of Fuels, Alcohol, and Portland (ANCAP)





It was initially set up under the leadership of the MIEM, without being formally anchored to any of the institutions but linked to MIEM's work on energy efficiency. It promotes policies and seeks solutions to tackle increasing greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in the sector by enhancing coordination, sharing information, avoiding duplication of efforts, and generating synergies. The 2005-2030 Energy Policy (EP) (MIEM, n.a.), the 2015-2024 National Energy Efficiency Plan (NEEP) (Government of Uruguay, 2015), and the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) (Oriental Republic of Uruguay, 2017) are the guiding policy instruments the government established with participation from ITEEG members to transform the transport sector while reaching the country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) goals. These policy instruments are complemented by different initiatives on the ground.

After adopting several policy measures, including tax incentives, Uruguay has brought over 130 electric vehicles onto the street, mostly for public urban transportation. The goal is to expand the use of electric taxis and bus fleets and enhance local planning and policy instruments. The members of the ITEEG are working with multilateral and international allies such as the EUROCLIMA+ program, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to reinforce action on the ground.

The activities of the ITEEG represent a good practice as they are characterised by strong inter-sectoral cooperation, well aligned with national frameworks and enjoy highest-level political buy-in.

BACKGROUND:

Uruguay is a high-income developing country characterised by a high level of education and a low level of inequality and poverty, rooted in strong institutional performance, public trust in government and a consensus-based political approach. Uruguay has an export-oriented economy, with most exports coming from the agricultural and forestry sectors (with goods such as cellulose, soybeans, rice, wheat and lumber). The country is also a large exporter of beef. Agriculture represents 20.6% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 70% of its exports (Kiprop, 2018).

Despite the continued growth for more than 15 years in the country, Uruguay's economy and society is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. For example, floods and droughts affect the population and infrastructure as well as the services and economic activities that are climate-dependent, such as agriculture tourism and hydropower generation. According to the national GHG inventory of 2012 presented in Uruguay's Fourth National Communication (Uruguay, 2016), carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions were mainly generated in the energy sector, which as a whole represented 95% of total CO₂ emissions. From the total energy-related emissions, industry accounted for 37.9% and transportation for 37.8%. The country's total net emissions accounted for 0.07% of the global anthropogenic GHG emissions for that year.

According to the 2017 Energy Balance (República Oriental de Uruguay, 2017) and regarding the emissions from energy consumption sectors, the main generator of CO₂ emissions has historically been the transport sector, with an average share of 40% of total CO₂ emissions over the whole period of analysis (1990-2017). In the last ten years, the increase in CO₂ emissions in the transport sector was mainly caused by increased gasoline consumption mostly for road transport with an increase of 114% due to the increase in car sales, while gas oil CO₂ emissions have remained steady. Gasoline and gas oil are the most consumed fuels in the transport sector. Biofuels (bio-ethanol and biodiesel) have been included in the final consumption matrix since 2010, and their share in the transport sector has increased from 1% (in 2010) to 6% (in 2017). Biodiesel and

bioethanol are produced domestically and make it possible to meet the demand while reducing fossil fuel consumption.

In 2009, the National Response System to Climate Change and Variability (SNRCC) was created to enhance participatory and cross-sectoral coordination, which was reflected in the formulation of the National Climate Change Response Plan (Gobierno de Uruguay, 2010) in 2010. The permanent work being done inside the SNRCC has allowed sectors to incorporate climate change considerations into their strategies and action plan, which was reflected in the policy instruments of national departmental and local governments.

The National Environment, Water and Climate Change Office of the Presidency of the Republic (SNAACC) was created in 2015 to articulate and coordinate the integrated execution of public policies on environment, water and climate change issues and to promote a strategic approach to mainstream an environmental dimension in the country's development policies (SNAACC, 2019a). The National Environmental System (SNA) was established by the Cabinet Council in 2016 through decree 172/2016 (Diario Oficial, 2016) with the purpose of strengthening, articulating, and coordinating Uruguay's public policies to protect the resources and services provided by ecosystems, and to increase adaptation to climate change, among other goals. The SNA gathers representatives of the National Environmental Cabinet, the SNAACC, the SNRCC and other key actors. The National Environmental Cabinet was also created in 2016 to propose to the executive power an integrated and equitable whole of government environmental policy for a sustainable and territorially balanced national development (SNAACC, 2019). It includes the President of the Republic, the SNAACC, the Minister of Housing, Land-Use Planning and Environment, the Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, the Minister of Industry, Energy, and Mining, the Minister of National Defense, the Minister of Public Health and the Minister of Economy and Finances.

In 2017, as a result of robust climate change governance, the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) was adopted following a participatory process. It presents a strategic and programmatic instrument to strengthen the country's structural transformation to a low-carbon economy by 2050, while providing the framework to Uruguay's first and subsequent NDC formulation.

Uruguay's first NDC was framed under the premise of being a developing country with the right to keep growing with the least GHG emission intensity possible, while reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience. Its mitigation contribution is presented for the period 2017-2025 and per GHG in order to allocate priorities for the country's mitigation strategies. Conditional and unconditional mitigation objectives for 2025 are: (i) global objectives by GHG emissions intensity regarding the evolution of the economy (gas emissions intensity per GDP unit); (ii) specific objectives for GHG emission intensity regarding food production (gas emissions intensity per kilogramme (kg) of beef cattle measured in live weight); and (iii) specific objectives for the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector (measured in hectares) (Oriental Republic of Uruguay, 2017). Regarding the energy sector (which includes transport), Uruguay committed to reduce the CO₂ emission intensity, i.e. emissions per unit of GDP, by 24% compared to 1990 levels.

The Climate Change Division within the Ministry of Housing, Land-Use Planning and Environment (MVOTMA), which was created in 1994, acts as an operative and executive body for climate change issues. Domestically, the MVOTMA presides the SNRCC and coordinates the implementation of the



¹More information on incentives for electric vehicles is available at: <https://www.miem.gub.uy/energia/movilidad-electrica>.

NCCP and NDC. Internationally, it represents the competent national authority for the implementation and enforcement of the United Nations Framework for Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Before the creation of ITEEG, the country had already established incentives for electric transportation such as a reduction of the 'Internal Specific Tax' (IMESI) to 5.75%, adopted through decree 246/012. The Investment Promotion Law (decree 02/12) offers some incentives for related investment projects including utility electric vehicles. Courses for efficient driving were developed in 2013 in parallel with the formulation of the regulations for vehicle labeling¹.

The ITEEG was set up in 2014 for promoting policies and finding solutions to tackle increasing GHG emissions in the transport sector (Uruguay, 2016). The 2005-2030 Energy Policy establishes the need to promote energy efficiency among all economic sectors in the country and for all energy uses, including transport as a major energy-consuming sector. The 2030 Strategic Plan for Transportation (SPT) (see Ministerio de Transporte y Obras Públicas, 2011) sets strategic guidelines for efficiency in the sector by establishing a low-emission transport system. The 2015-2024 National Energy Efficiency Plan (NEEP) addresses, among other actions, the labelling of light-duty vehicles as a way to promote more efficient vehicles in the market and to promote the inclusion of biofuels into conventional fuel mixes (Uruguay, 2016).

The NDC outlines specific measures for the transport sector that are already being implemented or to be executed in the future, in line with the NCCP and NEEP. These measures include, inter alia: adoption of biofuels, mandatory labelling of light-duty vehicles, installing an electric corridor (i.e. a route where electric vehicles have the facilities to circulate infrastructure as needed (e.g. charging stations) and the introduction of electric vehicles in public transport.

ACTIVITIES:

The ITEEG was created in 2014 as an early modality that the government adopted for addressing the transport sector transformation towards sustainability in a coordinated and cooperative way. The establishment of the ITEEG, that was led by the MIEM as part of the Programme of Energy Efficiency in Transport, was the reflection of the political will to join efforts through a voluntary initiative based on the shared vision of a cleaner, more efficient and sustainable transport sector. This effort aims to show the commitment from public institutions, both individually and collectively as a group.

The seven members of the group meet once a month and focus on the priorities identified in the national policies. Even though the ITEEG has no legal foundation, it allows for an efficient exchange and communication between technical and political members of the group. Based on this exchange, proposals for regulatory, technical and fiscal instruments and actions can be developed and formally adopted. The members are open to engage in exchanges with non-member actors, such as private transportation companies, and, if relevant, incorporate additional issues to their agenda.

The political will has been a major driver to transform the energy mix by promoting the use of renewable energies and energy efficiency in all economic sectors, and explicitly in transportation. The space provided by the ITEEG for assessing and monitoring alternative technologies and fuels for transportation contributed to achieving important milestones on the ground, with a focus on electromobility.

By contributing to the creation of a strong policy framework and clear action guidelines, the work done by the members of the ITEEG has encouraged the formulation and development of projects and programmes with resources from international and multilateral cooperation. Also, the work is conducted in full alignment with existing policies (i.e. the 2005-2030 Energy Policy, the 2030 Strategic Plan for Transportation, the NEEP and NDCs) and supporting their implementation. The ITEEG as a collective as well as individual members are usually the key actors in those initiatives. The ITEEG

ensures the coherence and synergy of the activities and the achievement of the desired impacts. As such, the ITEEG supports and helps to coordinate the execution of the following initiatives:

- EUROCLIMA+ (2016): The 'National Urban Mobility Programme in Uruguay' project will strengthen capacities for the planning of sustainable urban mobility and promote the transition towards the electrification of urban mobility. The initiative will develop a national programme to promote urban vehicle electrification within the framework of land use planning instruments and sustainable mobility criteria.
- GEF6 (2017): The project 'Towards a sustainable and efficient urban mobility system in Uruguay - MOVES' seeks to promote an efficient and low-carbon transport model in Montevideo, which can be replicated in other cities of Uruguay. The model is based on a) the improvement of institutional capacities and the development of appropriate regulations, b) the demonstration and utilisation of innovative technologies and business models; and c) awareness and cultural activities.
- GCF (2018): The ministries involved in the ITEEG presented the concept note 'Private Investment Facility Programme to accelerate Electric Mobility in the Transport Sector of Uruguay' to the private sector facility of the GCF, currently shortlisted, requesting concessional funding to replace 4% (approximately 120 vehicles) of the national public transport fleet.

INSTITUTIONS

INVOLVED:

————— The members of the ITEEG are:

- the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM)
- the Ministry of Housing, Land-Use Planning and Environment (MVOTMA)
- the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)
- the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTO)
- the Uruguayan state electric utility (UTE)
- the Montevideo Intendance (IM)
- the National Administration of Fuels, Alcohol, and Portland (ANCAP)

COOPERATION

WITH:

————— The formation of the ITEEG is rooted in a domestic initiative supported by its members. Other public institutions also cooperate with the ITEEG, such as the Institute of Technical Norms of Uruguay (UNIT) and the Consultative Council for Collective Urban Transport in Montevideo.

The international entities involved in the cooperation projects that complement the work done by the ITEEG are, among others, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for the EUROCLIMA+ initiative, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the GEF6 - MOVES initiative.

FINANCE:

————— The work done by the ITEEG is funded under the public budget of each institution.



IMPACT OF

ACTIVITIES:

The formation of the ITEEG has contributed to enhanced policy dialogue and inter-agency coordination to promote sustainable transport in the country.

In addition to that, it has created a flexible space for public entities related to transportation to discuss and exchange proposals and concerns with other non-member actors, such as transport operators and commercial chambers.

The work coordinated by the group as a whole and by each member individually set the basis for the transformation of the transport sector, providing some concrete outcomes in the terrain, inter alia:

- 2014: First pilot test in Montevideo of a 'Build your Dreams' (i.e. the biggest electric vehicle manufacturer worldwide) electric bus (k9 model) and car (e6 model)
- 2015: UTE purchased the first institutional electric fleet (60 light commercial vehicles Renault (Kangoo ZE model)) (see García et al., n.a.)
- 2016: Electric buses are included under the programme for energy efficiency certificates (EEC) with benefits between 3-30% of investments
- 2017: Adoption of Decree Nº325/2017 (Centro de Información Oficial, 2017) which approves a tax exemption (the global tariff rate) for electric engine vehicles for five years
- 2017: Installation of the first electric corridor in the country and in Latin America (covering the cities of Colonia del Sacramento and Punta del Este) with charging stations every 60 to 70 km
- 2018: 24 electric taxis operating and 30 electric taxi licenses launched; Licenses have a discount on the price and a subsidy for updating up to three conventional taxis per applicant

² The EECs are managed by Uruguay's energy efficiency trust fund FUDAEE. More information on FUDAEE available at: <http://www.eficienciaenergetica.gub.uy/fudae>. More information on the EECs available at: http://www.eficienciaenergetica.gub.uy/documents/20182/56459/CEE_web_nov16.pdf/e0cb4070-b2fa-4716-88f6-b92afe387d66 and http://www.eficienciaenergetica.gub.uy/documents/20182/22856/Decreto_N_46-016.pdf/d5a42c1a-3fb4-4399-8f03-ab2337c6d459

WHY IS IT

GOOD PRACTICE:

- **POLITICAL BUY-IN:** The ITEEG reflects commitment and leadership at the highest political level. It creates trust and facilitates decision-making in different key ministries and public institutions related to urban transport that are part of the group.
- **INTER-SECTORAL COOPERATION:** The ITEEG creates a space for constant exchange and coordination between its members and beyond. This space allows for the technical and political analysis of proposals for regulation, policies and plans, facilitating decision-making and the translation of decisions into concrete actions on the ground.
- **ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS:** The results of the country-driven process are clear and prioritised policies and actions, linked to existing national processes and embedded in established frameworks, taking into consideration a long-term vision (low-carbon development, the implementation of the NCCP and EP) combined with short- and medium-term goals (from the NDC, the NEEP).

- SUCCESS FACTORS:**
- **CAPITALISATION OF NATIONAL RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES:** The first success factor is that the country has recognised and decided to capitalise on its potential (in terms of resources and capacities) to transform the energy matrix towards a cleaner and more efficient one.
 - **CREATION OF A COHERENT POLICY FRAMEWORK:** The government has steadily worked towards creating a policy framework, ensuring coherence, synergies and feasibility of the goals adopted at the national and international level.
 - **COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS:** The ITEEG members have achieved to cooperate with other climate-related programmes and projects to support their agenda (such as EUROCLIMA+, GEF6-MOVES and GCF).
 - **PRIORITISATION OF THE TOPIC AMONG KEY ACTORS:** The ITEEG has prioritised the discussion and articulation among key public actors in order to achieve the objectives of plans and strategies.
 - **AN EFFICIENT AND FLEXIBLE ROOM FOR COORDINATION:** Considering that the transport sector is complex, the establishment of the ITEEG provides room for exchange and coordination among its members and establishes a shorter and more efficient way to set up concrete initiatives on the ground. Since the ITEEG does not have a legal foundation, it reflects the strong political will to work together to reach not only sector goals but major country objectives, such as working towards the creation of a low-carbon growing economy. As a consequence, the ITEEG has been able to clearly identify relevant initiatives framed within the agreed policies for a cleaner, more efficient and sustainable transport sector. This offers consistency but also enough flexibility to adapt to any specific context and to interact and consider other non-member actors, initiatives and concerns.
 - **CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL LEVEL:** A key success factor is the continuous communication between ITEEG members at the technical and political level. Technical proposals are better aligned and more quickly implemented as decision-making representatives of key sectors talk to each other and seek synergies. Even though in-person meetings take place only once a month, exchange through e-mails, workshops, project committees, etc. is more frequent.



**OVERCOMING BARRIERS /
CHALLENGES:** —————

**WHAT WERE THE MAIN BARRIERS /
CHALLENGES TO DELIVERY?**

SOCIO-CULTURAL:

Being a complex sector, the implementation of public policies on transportation that include climate change mitigation aspects faced resistance in the population but also within the government and from other stakeholders (such as public transportation companies).

TECHNOLOGICAL:

Related to the previous barrier, trying to introduce a new technology (electric vehicles) needed a push from the government to find a place in the market and progressively replace the oil fuel supply to transportation.

INSTITUTIONAL:

The coordination between sectoral ministries was only limited.

**HOW WERE THESE BARRIERS /
CHALLENGES OVERCOME?**

Political will and strong scientific and technical proposals have contributed to building a policy framework focused on energy efficiency. This makes it easier to relate with the economic impacts and formulate projects that help to raise awareness, build capacity and demonstrate technologies on the ground.

The ITEEG members prioritised the development of a policy framework and translated it into incentives and regulations that attract investors in new technologies. Cooperation projects also helped with providing pilots, finance and technical trainings to better understand the benefits of electric transport.

The cooperation between ITEEG members has progressively improved since its creation, when attending meetings and prioritising the work done inside the group was a challenge. Focusing on mitigation measures to introduce cleaner and more efficient transport solutions has been a process that has evolved over time. Political will, strong commitment and good faith from the ITEEG related government officers have made that possible.

- LESSONS LEARNED:** ———
- **ARTICULATE AMONG KEY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS FOR CONCRETE ACTION AND OUTCOMES ON THE GROUND:** Effective communication and articulation among government institutions must be built over time as part of a process that needs to be constantly reinforced in terms of capacities and other resources. Concrete outcomes on the ground are the result of good inter-institutional articulation and coordination among key actors.
 - **DEFINE GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES TO GUIDE COOPERATION PROJECTS:** Cooperation projects are better and more easily implemented when good coordination exists and clear, organised, aligned and coherent government priorities are defined.
 - **CREATE SPACES SUCH AS THE ITEEG FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NDC:** The design and implementation of the NDC measures for the transport sector benefit from the work being done within spaces like the ITEEG.

HOW TO REPLICATE

- THIS PRACTICE:** —————
- **COORDINATE INVOLVING ALL KEY ACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC POLICIES:** Public policies in support of a specific goal are successful when they are effectively designed and coordinated involving all key actors affected.
 - **DEFINE A POLICY FRAMEWORK THAT ALIGNS EFFORTS:** It is key to define a strong policy framework with clear objectives and actions in order to align efforts.
 - **GET HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL BUY-IN FOR THE WORK AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL:** Strong political will from the highest level must support the work being done within the ministries at the technical level. Political support is necessary to establish a robust framework with clear priorities, which also support the implementation of technical proposals.
 - **COMMUNICATE BETWEEN POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL LEVELS:** Good communication is critical between the key actors, both at the technical and political level, vertically and horizontally, to assess proposals that can be turned into concrete actions on the ground.

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FURTHER KEY

- RESOURCES:** ————— The work done by the ITEEG is supported by the following policy instruments:
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 - Government of Uruguay (2017). Política Nacional de Cambio Climático (National Climate Change Policy). Available at: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/uruguay/docs/MAYE/Pol%C3%ADtica_Nacional_de_Cambio_Clim%C3%A1tico_uv.pdf
 - Oriental Republic of Uruguay (2017). First Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement. Available at: https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Uruguay%20First/Uruguay_First%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution.pdf



WEBSITES: ————— A specific website is not available. However, the main government websites related to the ITEEG are:

- <https://www.miem.gub.uy/energia/programa-de-eficiencia-energetica-en-el-transporte>
- <http://www.eficienciaenergetica.gub.uy/transporte>
- <http://apps.mvotma.gub.uy/ingei>

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