



COLOMBIA

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According to data from the National Road Safety Agency in Colombia, 5 447 persons lost their lives in road crashes in 2020. This represents a 17.2% decrease on 2019. In 2020, there was a significant decrease in fatalities due to the mobility restrictions taken for the Covid-19 pandemic. Users of powered two-wheelers are the primary victims of road crashes and represent more than half of all persons killed in road traffic. Elderly people have the highest mortality rate and are particularly vulnerable as pedestrians. The current road safety strategy covers 2011-21 and includes the target to reduce road deaths by 26% by 2021. The next national road safety strategy will be published in the second half of 2022 and will cover 2022-31.

Road safety management and strategy

The number of road deaths has been recorded systematically since 1998. Since then, the number of road deaths has increased almost every year. It reached a peak in 2016 with 7 159 reported road deaths, then decreased in 2017 and increased again in 2018 and 2019. One of the main challenges facing Colombia is the explosion of the motor vehicle fleet, which concerns the passenger car fleet and, even more so, the motorcycle fleet. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of motorcycles has more than doubled and the number of cars has increased by 58%. In urban areas, this is partly due to the lack of adequate and accessible public transport systems, which tend to encourage the use of private motorcycles, which are considered cheaper and faster. This raises considerable challenges in traffic management, infrastructure maintenance and road safety.

Colombia: Quick facts

Population: 50.4 million

GDP per capita: USD 5 389

Registered motor vehicles: 16 million

- cars: 37%
- goods vehicles: 3%
- motorcycles: 37%

Speed limits:

- urban roads: 60 km/h
- rural roads: 80 km/h
- motorways: 120 km/h

Limits on Blood Alcohol Content: 0.2 g/l

Road fatalities: 5 477

- pedestrians: 21%
- cyclists: 8%
- car occupants: 8%
- motorcyclists: 56%
- other: 7%

Road fatalities per 100 000 population: 10.8

Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles: 3.4

Cost of road crashes: 0.2% of GDP (2016)

All data 2020 unless otherwise stated.

The first road safety national plan was adopted in 2012 and covered the period 2011-16. A second version of the plan was adopted in 2013 and covered the period 2011-21.

Key road safety measures include:

- 1993: creation of the *Fondo de Prevención Vial* or Road Prevention Fund, the first governmental body dedicated to road safety.

- 1993: creation of the *Seguro Obligatorio de Accidentes de Transito* (SOAT) or Mandatory Traffic Accident Insurance, the primary source of funding for road safety.
- 2002: adoption of the National Transit Code (769 Law of 2002).
- 2012: adoption of the first national road safety plan, 2011-16 (PNSV).
- 2013: adoption of the second version of the national road safety plan 2011-21.
- 2013: creation of the National Road Safety Agency (ANSV), which replaced the Road Prevention Fund.
- 2013: adoption of the Drink Driving Law 1696.

Colombia's responsibility for road safety lies with the National Road Safety Agency (ANSV). The agency was officially created in 2013, but it became operational only in December 2016 due to the difficulty of providing the administrative, legal and fiscal procedures required for the entire operation of the Agency.

The Agency is attached to the Ministry of Transport but is financially autonomous. Its primary mission is to prevent and reduce traffic crashes (1702 Law of 2013, Article 2). The Agency coordinates public and private organisations committed to road safety and implements the road safety action plan of the government.

Colombia's current national road safety strategy is laid down in the Road Safety Strategy 2011-21. It is based on five strategic pillars:

1. road safety management
2. road user behaviour
3. post-crash care
4. road infrastructure
5. vehicles.

The strategy is based on the main target to reduce by 26% the number of road deaths between 2011 and 2021. It also includes several intermediate road safety indicators, such as:

- A reduction by 18% in the number of pedestrians killed.
- A reduction by 27% in the number of motorcyclists killed.
- The elimination of the number of alcohol-related fatal crashes.

It is unlikely that any of these targets will be met.

Colombia is working on the next road safety strategy for 2022-31, which will be published in the second half of 2022.

Latest road safety measures

Local committees and territorial councils for road safety have been established through the National Road Safety Agency to implement the concept of shared responsibility and involve the local authorities.

Since 2018, the National Road Safety Agency has been working on *Pequeñas Grandes Obras* (PGO) (Small Great Works), a programme to improve local infrastructure. The main objectives are to implement efficient interventions at critical points to reduce the number of crashes and to calm traffic down.

A wide range of communications campaigns have been conducted focusing on drinking and driving, speeding, and using helmets.

A national standard for motorcycle helmets was introduced to improve helmet quality.

A regulation on advertisements for vehicle sales was introduced to include icons concerning the safety features of the vehicles.

Costs of road crashes

According to a study by the insurance sector, traffic crashes represent a significant cost for Colombia, estimated in 2016 at about USD 767 million (0.2% of GDP). Colombia is currently working on an updated estimate of the costs of road crashes.

Safety performance indicators

Speed

Inappropriate speed is one of the leading causes of road crashes. A study conducted by Chile's Automobile Club during 2020 in the biggest city of Chile, Santiago, revealed that 60% of drivers exceed the speed limit in urban areas at any given time. The study also showed speeding was equally present in men and women and different age groups.

It is estimated that speeding is responsible for around 30% of fatal crashes. In the last decade, speeding has been the leading cause of death, with 4 559 road fatalities attributed to it.

In August 2018, the Chilean Congress approved a bill to reduce the urban speed limit from 60 to 50 km/h – an initiative the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications had pursued for many years. A year after the speed limit reduction, there has been a slight decrease in crashes, fatalities and injured people reported by the police. There will be a more thorough evaluation of the new regulation once more data are validated and available.

Drink-driving

Driving under the influence of alcohol is another major cause of road crashes in Colombia, as in most IRTAD countries. According to police reports, 165 persons were killed in an alcohol-related crash, representing 7.7% of all road deaths in 2021 with available information on the cause of the crash. This figure is probably largely underreported. In a recent report of the IRTAD Group, it was found that, on average, in IRTAD countries, 21.6% of road deaths were alcohol-related.

The general maximum authorised blood alcohol content (BAC) in Colombia is 0.2 g/l for all drivers.

The most recent measure to combat impaired driving was introducing a new law in 2013 to increase the fine for drinking and driving. In practical terms, before 2013, the maximum amount of the fine was approximately USD 740. Today, the fine can be as high as USD 11 800.

Drugs and driving

Drugs and driving is a worrying concern in Colombia. However, there is no data yet on the prevalence of drugs in road crashes.

Use of mobile phones while driving

An increasing problem for traffic safety in Colombia is distraction, for instance, through mobile phone use while driving or crossing a street. However, there are no official statistics on the prevalence of distraction in crashes.

It is forbidden to drive with a hand-held mobile phone, but the use of hands-free mobile phones is tolerated.

There is no data yet on the prevalence of sleepiness and fatigue as a causal factor in crashes. But it is recognised as an important issue.

Seat belt and helmet use

Wearing a seat belt has been compulsory in Colombia since 2002 in both front and rear seats. Regarding rear seats, the law stipulates that seat belt use is only mandatory for vehicles manufactured after 2004. The wearing rate in rear seats is very low, estimated at 2% in 2016. Children under ten years of age must be seated in the back and adequately restrained, considering their weight and height.

For motorcyclists, helmet wearing is the most effective passive safety habit. In Colombia, helmets have been compulsory on all powered two-wheelers since 2004.

Bicycle helmets have been compulsory for children and adults since 2004. However, they are not enforced.

Road safety data for Colombia at a glance

Table 1. Long-term road safety trends for Colombia

	2010	2018	2019	2020	2020 % change over	
					2019	2010
Reported safety data						
Fatalities	5 418	6 629	6 577	5 447	-17.2	0.5
Injury crashes	78 072	82 336	79 810	57 565	-27.9	-26.3
Deaths per 100 000 population	12.3	13.7	13.3	10.8	-18.8	-12.0
Deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles	7.1	4.6	4.3	3.4	-20.8	-51.8
Fatalities by road user						
Pedestrians	1 738	1 677	1 651	1 149	-30.4	-33.9
Cyclists	333	419	419	445	6.2	33.6
Riders of motorised two-wheelers	2 144	3 372	3 554	3 050	-14.2	42.3
Passenger car occupants	642	594	568	414	-27.1	-35.5
Other road users	561	567	385	389	1.0	-30.7
Fatalities by age group						
0-14 years	272	238	210	157	-25.2	-42.3
15-17 years	174	267	233	186	-20.2	6.9
18-20 years	338	437	474	401	-15.4	18.6
21-24 years	536	756	718	618	-13.9	15.3
25-64 years	3 275	3 851	3 894	3 372	-13.4	3.0
65-74 years	398	512	533	403	-24.4	1.3
≥ 75 years	417	568	515	310	-39.8	-25.7
Fatalities by road type						
Urban roads	3 355	3 598	3 473	2 963	-14.7	-11.7
Outside urban areas	1 923	2 869	2 938	2 315	-21.2	20.4
Traffic data						
Registered vehicles (thousands)	7 665	14 446	15 286	15 977	4.5	108.5
Registered vehicles per 1 000 population	173.9	299.3	309.5	317.2	2.5	82.4

Figure 1. Evolution of road fatalities, injury crashes, motorisation, traffic and GDP in Colombia, 2010-20

Index 2010 = 100

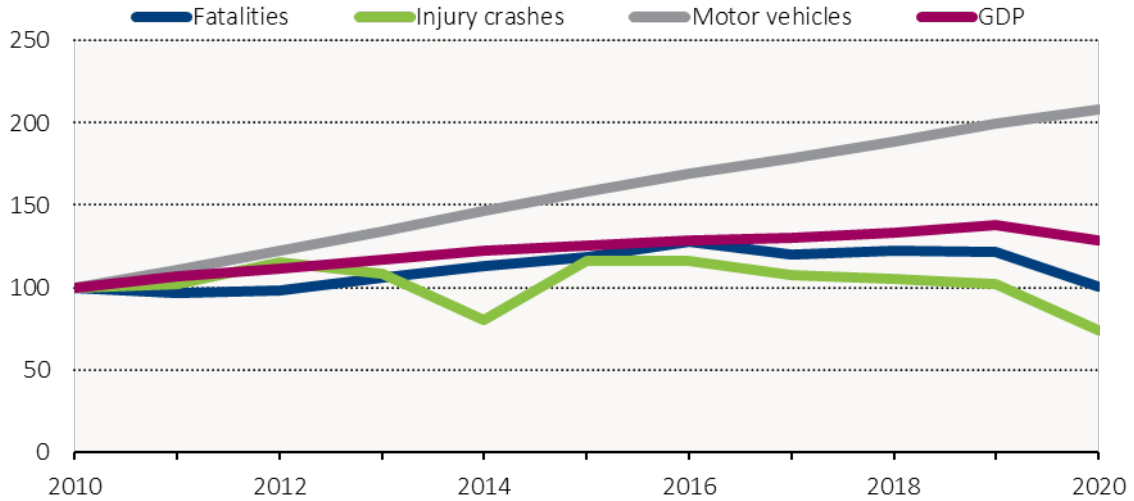


Figure 2. Road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in Colombia in comparison with IRTAD countries, 2020

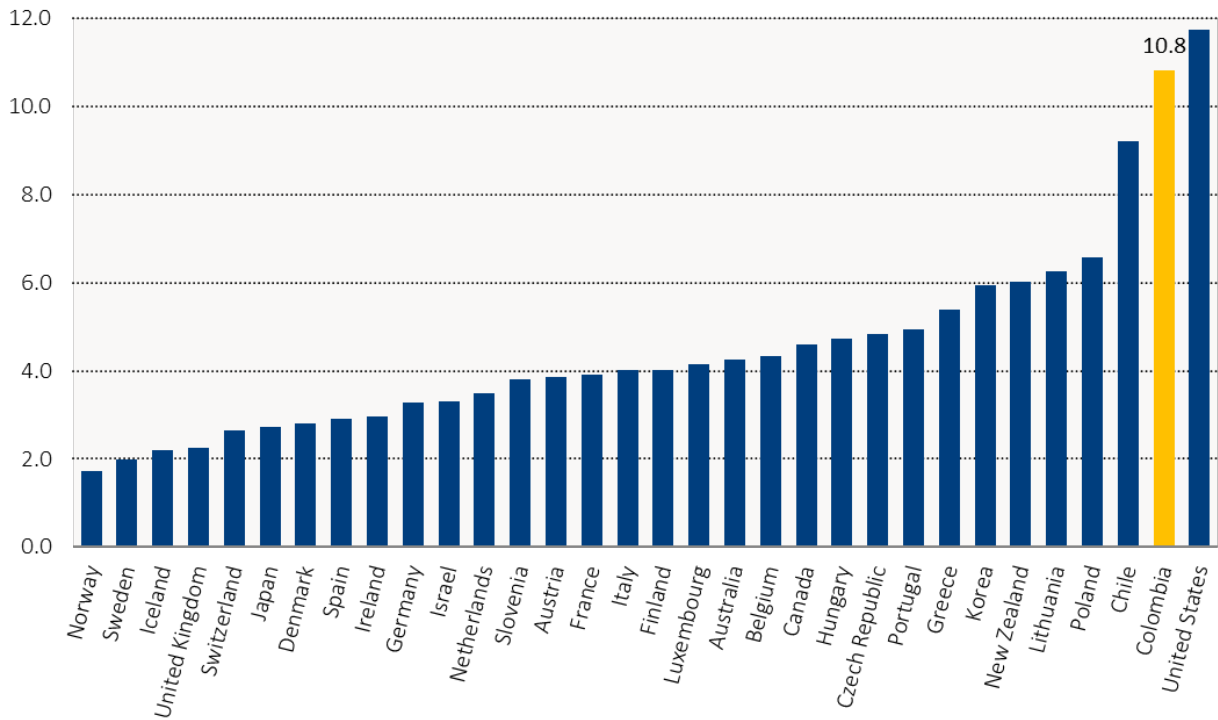
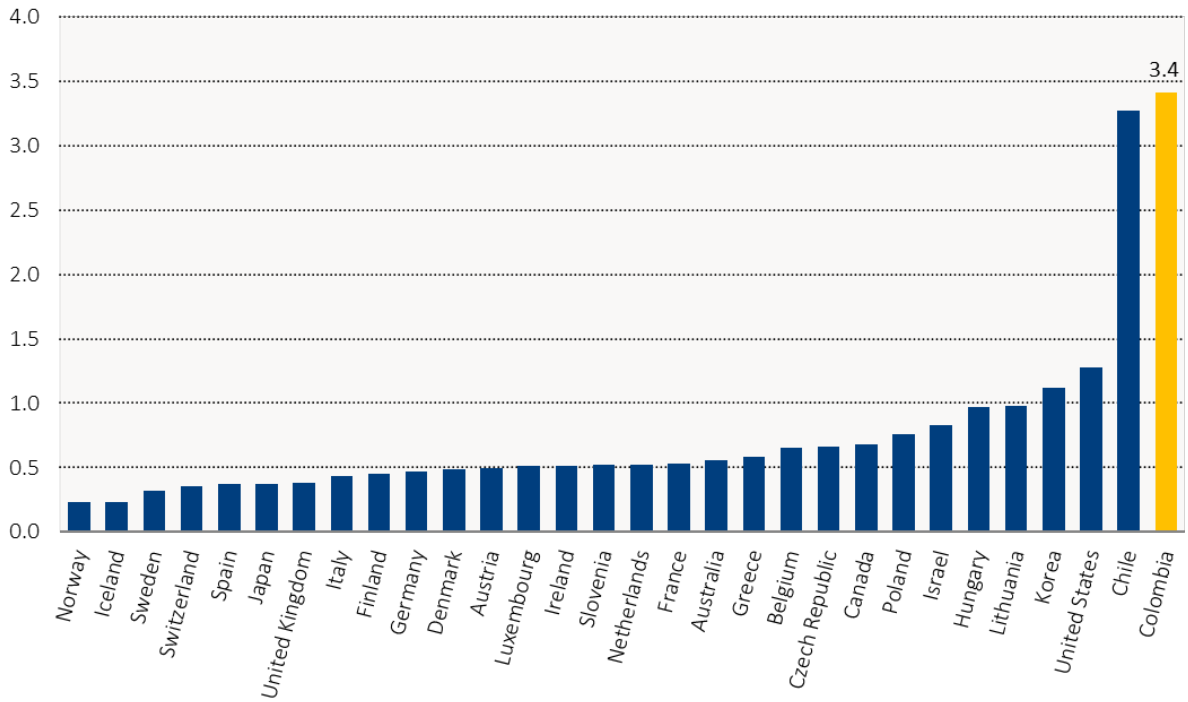


Figure 3. Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles in Colombia in comparison with IRTAD countries, 2020



Note: in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Hungary registered vehicles do not include mopeds.

Figure 4. Evolution of road fatalities in Colombia by user category, age group and road type, 2010-20

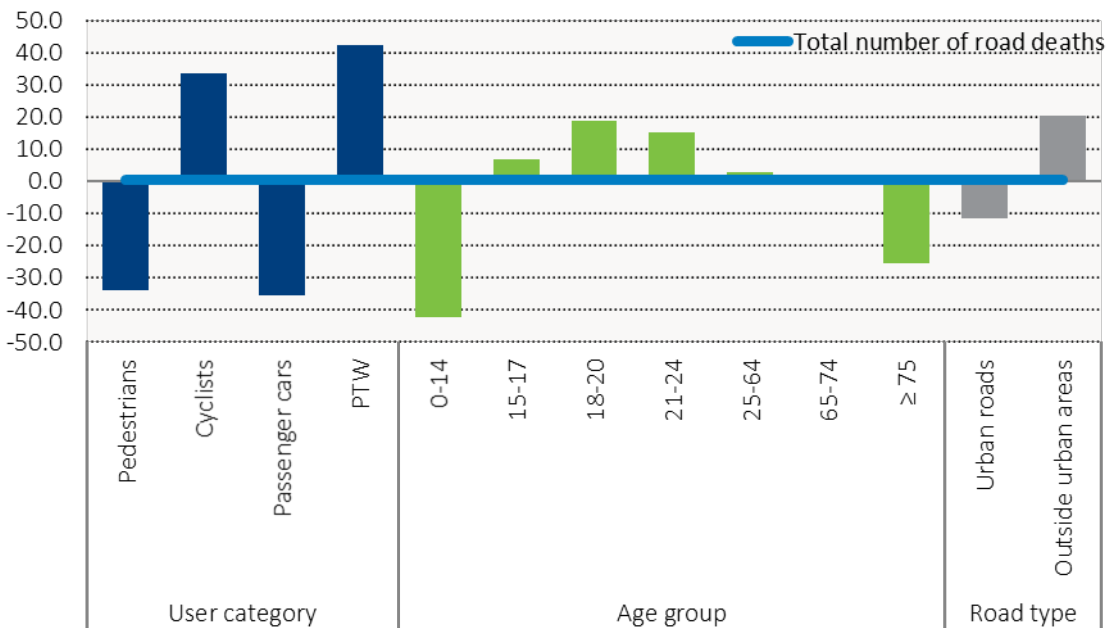


Figure 5. Road fatalities in Colombia by user category, 2020

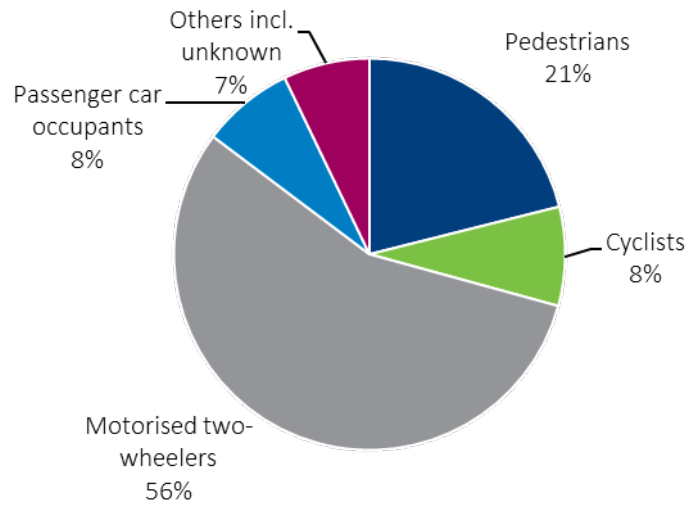


Figure 6. Road fatalities in Colombia by road type, 2020

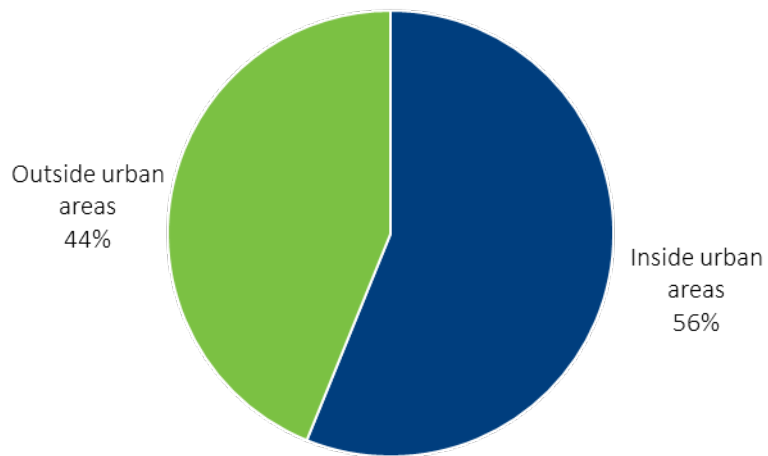
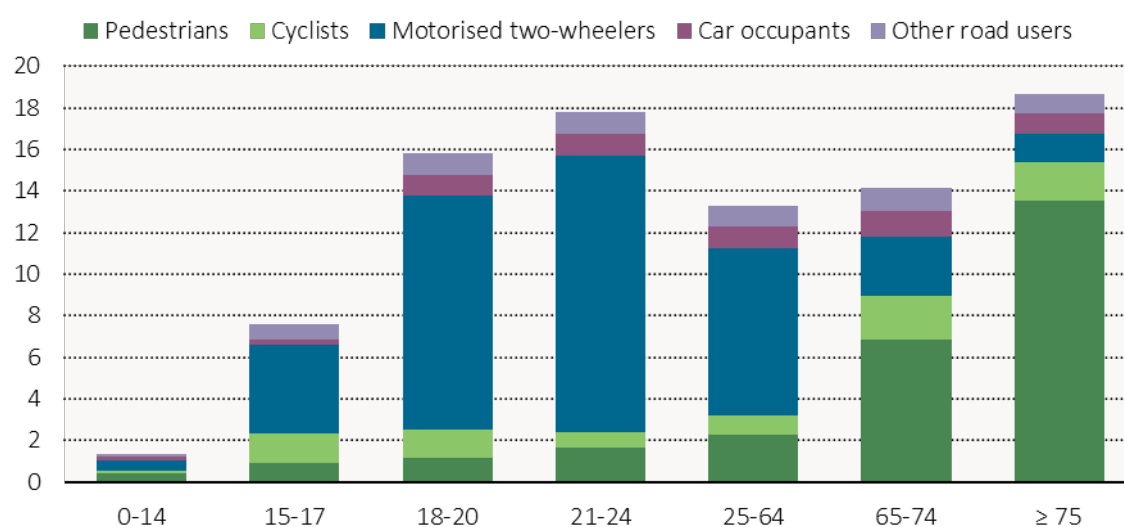


Figure 7. Road fatality rate in Colombia by user category and age group, 2020

Rate per 100 000 population in the same age group

**Table 2. Seat belt and helmet wearing rates**

Percentages

	2012	2016
Front seats		
Driver	60	75
Passenger	41	64
Rear seats		
General	..	2
Helmet		
Riders of motorcycles	92	96
Passengers of motorcycles	79	80

Research and resources

Websites

National Road Safety Agency: <https://ansv.gov.co/>.

National Road Safety Observatory: <https://ansv.gov.co/observatorio/?op=Home>.

Ministry of Transport: <https://www.mintransporte.gov.co/>.

Definition, methodology, data collection

Road fatality: a person who dies following injuries caused by a road crash.

In Colombia, the National Road Safety Agency published the national statistics regarding road crashes through its National Road Safety Observatory.

The statistics from the Agency come from three administrative records:

- the violent death registry
- the injured person registry
- the traffic crash registry.

The first two registries are administered by the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences and the third is administered separately by the Ministry of Transport.

The information contained in the violent death registry and the injured person registry is collected by the medical forensic personnel. The national and local traffic police collect data in the traffic crash registry throughout the country. All these data are sent to the National Road Safety Observatory for processing, analysis and publication.