

EMPRESA COLOMBIANA DE VIAS FERREAS (FERROVIAS)

This state-owned company is responsible for constructing and maintaining railways, stations, telecommunications and signalling in addition to regulating transport operations. It will be funded primarily through 10 percent of a gasoline tax channelled through the National Highways Fund and from fees it charges for the use of its facilities.

SOCIEDAD COLOMBIANA DE TRANSPORTE FERROVIARIO (STF S.A.)

STF has responsibility for providing cargo and passenger transport services. The Colombian government will retain a minimum of 51 percent ownership, while up to 49 percent will be sold to other entities, including private investors, regional or municipal governments, and parastatals. STF was to initiate operations in August 1990. It has the authority to offer services directly or through association with private companies.

URBAN MASS TRANSIT

Characterized by growing urbanization as a result of population growth and rural migration, Colombian cities are hamstrung by their exclusive reliance on privately-owned or cooperative bus systems for public transport.

In 1986 the city of Medellín contracted the construction of a metro with a Spanish-German consortium. Its final cost, originally estimated at US \$656 million, will probably reach US \$1.45 billion. The project has been plagued by delays, cost overruns and financing problems from the outset.

Also in 1986, the newly-elected government of President Barco invited 26 countries to offer proposals to build a metro in Bogotá. Although Canada's Lavalin International was one of four finalists, an Italian consortium was selected for contract discussions in 1988. The estimated cost has soared from the original US \$250 million to more than US \$1.2 billion. However, political wrangling between the national and municipal governments clouded the project's future, and no contract had been signed as of July 1990.

■ Apart from Bogotá and Medellín, medium-sized Colombian cities unable to afford a metro, such as Cali, Barranquilla, Pereira, Manizales, Bucaramanga, Cartagena and Santa Marta, will require creative mass transit solutions to deal with growing congestion in the medium term.