

# L'ÉTAPE ECUADOR

BY **TOUR DE FRANCE**

## For the first time, Cuenca will host a stage of the "Tour de France"



**On September 28th, , Pablo Burbano, Deputy Mayor of Cuenca, Dara Uy, representative of Amaury Sport Organization, Pedro Vera, representative of Endepro and Sebastián Palacios, Minister of Sports of Ecuador, officially presented Cuenca as the venue of "L'Etape" of the "Tour de France".**

This international sporting event will last 3 days, starting on February 18 with the delivery of kits to the participants and will end on February 20 with the awards ceremony for the best athletes.

The objective of these stages, which are developed outside of France, is to promote professional, amateur and recreational cycling by bringing the excitement and challenges of the Tour stages to different parts of the world. Other cities that have hosted these stages are: Acapulco, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Madrid, Prague, among others located in 20 countries.

This February 20, Cuenca will join a select group of cities that have been part of the "Tour de France". This stage will have 3 routes that combine the colorful urban scenes of our city, with mountain routes designed to leave participants breathless, both for the beauty of the city and its surroundings, as well as for the rigorousness of the route.

"L'Etape" is not only designed for elite cyclists. There are three routes that were designed to attract fans of this sport, regardless of their physical condition or level of preparation, to live an experience similar to that of the Tour.

The first route, 150 kilometers long, is the most competitive one and it is designed for those who have experience in long distances and endurance. The second route, 80 kilometers long, is the middle-distance route, and it is designed for intermediate cyclists seeking to measure their condition without the need to risk the long-distance route.

Finally, there is the recreational route, focused on promoting the sport while enjoying the city and its surroundings. This route is 40 kilometers long, mostly through the streets of the city, in a sort of controlled cycling tour.

According to the organizing company Endepro, up to the closing date of registration, 2000 cyclists sign up to participate in this sporting event. Most participants are nationals from Quito, Guayaquil and other cities, while at least 200 participants are foreigners. In addition to the participants, it is expected the arrival of approximately 5 thousand people who, although they will not be part of the sporting event, will help the tourist, hotel and economic reactivation of the city, injecting about 4 million dollars to the local economy.

This type of international stages have similar characteristics to those of the "Tour de France": official equipment, prizes are awarded to the best mountain and sprint times and to the winner of the stage. Also, an award ceremony is held where medals and other activities are handed out.

Cuenca was selected among several candidate cities nationwide. The criteria used by the representatives of Amaury Sport Organization and Endepro to select the city were based on the support of the authorities, who from the first moment worked together with the private enterprise to make this event possible. Additional criteria considered to choose Cuenca was the presence of a cycling network and its future projection, hotel capacity, mountainous geography of the outskirts of the city, and the colonial touch and the scenic route of the city. Moreover, Cuenca was positively considered as venue as an opportunity to pay tribute to the influence that this city has had in high performance sport at national and international level. Finally, a decisive factor in favor of the selection of Cuenca for the stage was the growing cycling culture, since this event seeks to give greater visibility and potentialize the cycling culture.

For the city of Cuenca, it is an honor to be considered as part of the world stages of the "Tour de France" in this first edition. Within the Internationalization Strategy of Cuenca 2021-2025, Axis 1 - Cuenca Quality of Life -, it is proposed that the city is seen as a sports territory considering the climate conditions, natural environment and adequate sports infrastructure to become a pole of attraction for both, the preparation of elite athletes, and to host international sporting events.

This international event is a sample of the potential Cuenca has as a destination for specialized sports. We are sure that "L'Etape" of the "Tour de France" will be the first of many high-level sporting events that will be held in Cuenca as its official venue. Putting our city back on the sporting map, while strengthening the city's relations with other similar cities around the world and private actors.