

## Toyota Mobility Foundation Selects Brazil as Headquarters for MUH (Mobility Unlimited Hub) LATAM to Help Boost the Active Mobility Technology Sector

*Based at ONOVOLAB in São Carlos, the Foundation focuses on "Active Mobility" to serve 85 million people with disabilities in Latin America; the model replicates the successful Ecosystem Creation of MUH Toronto in Canada.*

**SÃO CARLOS, Brazil (June 8, 2026)**—The Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF) announced today the expansion of its Mobility Unlimited Hub (MUH) program from its first location, in Toronto, Canada, to Latin America, with the establishment of a strategic center in Brazil. Based at ONOVOLAB, one of the country's leading innovation hubs, located in São Carlos (SP), the project is aimed at transforming the region into an export hub for active mobility technologies and human mobility solutions. MUH São Carlos arose to help address demographic and economic urgency in the region. According to data from the World Bank, approximately 85 million people live with some form of disability in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Lack of infrastructure and adequate technology to serve people with disabilities create more than just social barriers. It is estimated that the exclusion of this population results in a loss of up to 7% of GDP for Latin American nations. In Brazil, the 2022 Census\* indicates that over 14 million citizens have mobility impairments, a number expected to rise as the population ages.

"The arrival of this initiative in Brazil marks a long-term commitment to human development and inclusive mobility in the region to help everyone reach their full potential. The country is not just a large-scale market but a strong source for talent that needs support to scale 'Active Mobility' solutions", explains William Chernicoff, Program Manager, Mobility Unlimited Hubs, TMF.

### **FOCUS ON ACTIVE MOBILITY**

The concept of "Active Mobility" championed by TMF differs from traditional grant-giving organizations. Among other focus areas, TMF seeks startups developing technologies centered on personal mobility, promoting autonomy and social participation. The goal of these solutions is to give individuals greater freedom and active independence to more

equitably participate in society. They do this by enabling people to overcome accessibility barriers and interact with their environment on their own, helping assistive, rehabilitative, and adaptive technology create a path toward a fuller, more integrated life.

Chernicoff reinforces that mobility should be seen as a universal journey, saying, “We work with a concept that goes beyond movement. It’s about freedom and human dignity. We want to support startups that improve real daily life because, the truth is, at some point in our lives, we will all need technologies that expand or restore our autonomy”.

## **INNOVATION AND ACCELERATION HUB**

The selection of São Carlos and ONOVOLAB to replicate the successful MUH Toronto model (run in collaboration with MaRS Discovery District) was a key strategic choice, as the city is renowned for its high academic and technological density. The MUH São Carlos acceleration program will occupy a dedicated 240 square-meter area, which will be redesigned to become a national benchmark in inclusive infrastructure.

“We already have a strong innovation ecosystem, but we are creating Brazil’s first hub strictly dedicated to accessibility. Our goal is to convert startups into real-impact projects, connecting entrepreneurs with global experts and investors,” says Leandro Palmieri, CEO and co-founder of ONOVOLAB.

## **SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION**

Unlike traditional incubators that house early-stage projects, TMF’s focus will be on startups from across Latin America with solutions in advanced development stages (TRL levels 6 to 9). The program will provide cohorts of startups comprehensive support for two years to help them transition to their growth stage. “In addition to mentorship and technical consulting, the selected startups will benefit from the Toyota Mobility Foundation’s global prestige, a strategic differentiator for expanding into international markets and securing new investments,” adds Palmieri.

As part of its international collaboration network, MUH São Carlos will work alongside SmartJob ([www.smartjob.net](http://www.smartjob.net)), a global organization specialized in inclusive entrepreneurship, helping connect the program with initiatives, experts, and innovation ecosystems from around the world.

TMF’s thesis in Brazil is supported by market fundamentals. The World Health Organization (WHO) projects the assistive technology sector will reach \$25 billion by 2025. “By focusing on advanced-stage startups (TRL 6 to 9), we aim to support the transition from great technologies to viable market solutions that currently face what is often referred to as the “valley of death” between prototype and commercial scale, addressing a bottleneck that

stalls the economic potential of inclusion in the region. Concurrently, by demonstrating that startups in this space can succeed, we aim to strengthen the entire value chain and pipeline from invention through growth,” concludes Chernicoff.

The official timeline sets the opening of applications for the first acceleration cycle in the coming weeks, with operational activities scheduled to begin in August.

*\*The Brazilian Census is a comprehensive nationwide survey conducted every ten years by IBGE to gather demographic and socioeconomic data on the entire population.*

### **About Toyota Mobility Foundation**

[Toyota Mobility Foundation](#) (Chair Akio Toyoda) was established in August 2014 by Toyota Motor Corporation (Toyota) to support the development of a more mobile society in which everyone can move freely. The Foundation underscores Toyota’s ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and respect for people. It utilizes Toyota’s expertise and technologies to support strong mobility systems while eliminating disparities in mobility. TMF works in partnership with universities, governments, non-profits, research institutions and other organizations, creating programs that are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address mobility issues around the world.

“TMF aims to create a truly mobile society that will help people live better lives no matter where they are,” said Chair Akio Toyoda.

The foundation formally initiated its presence in Brazil in January 2017 by deploying capital and technical teams through strategic partnerships with Toyota do Brasil and WRI Brasil, rather than establishing a separate local legal entity. This presence was consolidated through successful initiatives such as the InoveMob Challenge launched in 2018, which mapped urban transport solutions across Brazilian cities. While the national Fundação Toyota do Brasil focuses on local environmental preservation and social sustainability, TMF operates as a distinct global entity dedicated to urban mobility, sustainable transport, and accessibility.

Building on this established regional track record, TMF is now expanding its footprint through strategic initiatives like the Mobility Unlimited Hub, which was first launched in partnership with MaRS in Toronto and is now expanding to Brazil with ONOVOLAB to foster ecosystems in active mobility and drive high-impact solutions across Latin America.

**For interviews, personalities, and more details about the Toyota Mobility Foundation:**

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