



Finalist Announcement

Venice



UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 08:00 CET 28 MAY 2025

TOYOTA MOBILITY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES FIVE FINALISTS FOR \$3 MILLION VENICE SUSTAINABLE CITIES CHALLENGE

- **Five finalists have been selected for the \$3-million Venice Sustainable Cities Challenge**
- **The finalists were chosen for their innovative solution to encourage the use of existing low- and zero-carbon transport modes**
- **Finalists will be awarded \$130k implementation funding to demonstrate their innovations for the city of Venice**

VENICE, Italy: The Toyota Mobility Foundation has announced the five finalists selected to advance in the [Sustainable Cities Challenge](#) in Venice, Italy. These finalists were chosen by a [panel of expert judges](#) following a rigorous evaluation of solutions aimed at increasing the use of existing low- and zero-carbon transport modes in the city of Venice.

Developed in collaboration with the City of Venice, [Challenge Works](#), and [World Resources Institute](#), the two-stage, three-year \$9 million global TMF Sustainable Cities Challenge received over 120 entries from across the world to encourage Venetians to use active mobility, public transport, and shared mobility across Venice's mainland.

Out of the 120 entries, ten semi-finalists went on to adapt and refine their solutions over a 6-month period. Only five out of ten of the semifinalists were selected to advance to the finalist stage, based on the following criteria: innovation, impact, usability, viability, and team capacity. Judges looked for solutions that not only inspire behavior change toward sustainable transport but also demonstrate a deep understanding of local context, user needs, and implementation feasibility. Each team was required to present a clear demonstration plan with measurable KPIs to ensure long-term impact and scalability.

The judging panel, comprised of urban mobility experts and city stakeholders, selected the following finalists:

- **BetterPoints Ltd** - BetterPoints works with businesses, public bodies and universities to change the way people think about how they move. The team is developing an app to reward citizens for switching to more active and sustainable modes of travel. They aim to build over 40 behavior change techniques into the app, ensuring gamification, goal setting and other impactful approaches to deliver a modal shift.
- **Factual Consulting SL** - Factual is an innovation and strategy consulting firm committed to transforming mobility. The team's platform is a digital tool which aims to promote sustainable mobility habits through innovative approaches like micro incentives. The platform consists of behavior tracking modules which can be integrated into transport apps already used in the city.
- **Instant System S.A.S** - Instant System S.A.S has developed a MaaS platform combining an intermodal trip planner with automatic journey detection. It integrates public transport, biking, walking, and shared mobility, offering real-time, CO₂-aware itineraries. A gamified user profile encourages sustainable habits, while data insights help the city monitor mobility trends. The platform simplifies access to all modes, making eco-friendly travel in Venice both intuitive and engaging.
- **Nudgd AB** - Nudgd is a Swedish startup dedicated to driving sustainable behavior change through innovative digital nudging solutions. Its platform aims to integrate behavioral science with digital tools to encourage sustainable mobility habits. The platform will be tailored to Venice's unique context – where 80% of residents are already multimodal – unlocking potential to shift car-dependent users toward active and shared transport.
- **UrbanTide Limited x Love to Ride** - Love to Ride Venice is a scalable, data-driven solution combining UrbanTide's smart mobility insights delivered through its own platform, with Love to Ride's proven behavior change platform. Through targeted campaigns, real-time analytics, and community engagement, they aim to make cycling more visible, motivating, and accessible.

"We're excited to move into this next stage with such innovative finalists whose work supports a renewed approach to urban mobility in the city," said Monica Perez Lobo, Director, Toyota Mobility Foundation Europe. "Changing travel behaviors takes time, but even small shifts, when adopted widely, can lead to significant improvements in air quality, congestion, and overall livability. Through this Challenge, we aim to deliver tangible benefits to Venice and inspire similar transformations in cities around the world. It is through partnerships like these that bold ideas can become lasting solutions."

Kathy Nothstine, Director of Cities and Societies at Challenge Works, commented, “Reaching this finalist stage marks an important step that supports Venice’s ongoing journey toward sustainable mobility. It’s not just about deploying smart tools; success lies in how deeply these solutions resonate with people’s everyday needs and choices. This Challenge creates an opportunity to test those insights in a real urban environment and drive meaningful change.”

Ben Welle, Director of Integrated Transport and Innovation at WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, added, “The selection of these five teams aligns with an exciting chapter in Venice’s ongoing journey of innovation in the field of mobility. These ideas are designed not just to work here, but to inspire solutions globally. The innovations we see emerging will benefit local communities and offer lessons for cities around the world working to enhance sustainable urban mobility.”

The teams will now receive \$130k implementation funding to proceed with them in the Finalist stage, where they will further develop and test their solutions within the city. Their efforts will contribute to a broader vision of cleaner, smarter urban transport systems that can be replicated globally.

The Sustainable Cities Challenge is funded by the Toyota Mobility Foundation and has been designed in partnership with Challenge Works and the World Resources Institute. It aims to create cleaner, more efficient urban mobility systems worldwide. Venice’s finalist solutions exemplify the creativity and commitment needed to address global sustainable challenges through local action.

For more information, visit sustainablecitieschallenge.org.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

About the Sustainable Cities Challenge

The Sustainable City Challenge is a two-stage, three-year \$9 million global opportunity for cities and innovators. The Sustainable Cities Challenge will be delivered over two stages:

- **Stage 1: Call to cities**

The Challenge sought cities who wish to host City Challenges in 2024 – 2025. In November 2023, ten shortlisted cities received a range of capacity building support to help them understand the issue they want to solve and attract innovators to provide solutions. This included participation in a capacity building academy in Dallas, Texas from November 13–15, 2023. By May 2024, three cities were selected to host City Challenges to find solutions for local mobility challenges: Detroit (USA), Varanasi (India), and Venice (Italy).

- **Stage 2: Call to Innovators via 3 City Challenges**

Working with the host cities, the Sustainable Cities Challenge team supported by designing local City Challenges which launched between May and June 2024. Each City Challenge offers up to \$3 million in implementation funding to innovators. Host Cities held open calls for entries from innovators via their City Challenge with the support of the Sustainable Cities Challenge team. Together, they selected their finalists to test their solutions in 2024–2025. In 2026, final implementation funding will be given to winners in each host city to continue to implement and grow their solutions.

Timeline of the TMF Sustainable Cities Challenge

- Detroit Challenge: Transforming Freight
- Varanasi Challenge: Innovating Crowd Flow
- Venice Challenge: Embracing Sustainable Mobility

Meet the judges

- **Jannis Linke:** Jannis is a research associate and PhD candidate at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. In his research, he focuses on factors influencing consumers' choices of sustainable mobility solutions, including the integration of new mobility services. He has collaborated with industry and city partners on various projects and was a visiting PhD student at LSE Cities. Prior to his academic career, he worked in the railway industry.
- **Alexander Schmidt:** Founder/CEO at BABLE Smart Cities with the mission to create sustainable and inclusive cities and towns. Schmidt's work focuses on urban mobility, new digital markets, system analysis and development of urban solutions. He holds a M.Sc. Transport from Imperial College London, Environmental Engineering & Business Studies. He was formerly a researcher and project lead at

the Fraunhofer Research Society, Morgenstadt, in Stuttgart, Germany and at the MIT Sensible Cities Lab in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Schmidt was also part of the founding and management team of EIT Urban Mobility, an institution of the European Union.

- **Karen Vancluysen:** Karen has been the Secretary General of POLIS since September 2014, after having been the network's Research Director for 10 years. POLIS is the leading European network of cities and regions on urban transport innovation. For over 25 years, Karen has been involved in European urban transport networking and policy activities, and EU research and innovation projects covering a wide range of urban mobility topics.

About Toyota Mobility Foundation

The Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF) was established in August 2014 by the 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.

In the past, TMF has led a range of Challenges, including the global **Mobility Unlimited Challenge**, **CATCH** in Malaysia, **InoveMob Challenge** in Brazil and STAMP Challenge in India. You can find out more about TMF and how it is governed at toyotamobilityfoundation.org

About Challenge Works

For a decade, Challenge Works has established itself as a global leader in designing and delivering high-impact challenges to incentivize cutting-edge innovation for social good. Challenge Works is a social enterprise founded by the UK's innovation agency Nesta. Over the past decade, Challenge Works has worked on 101 challenge prizes, engaging more than 16,000 innovators and unlocking over £310 million in funding to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges. Challenge Works believe no challenge is unsolvable, partnering with non-profits, governments, and other organizations around the globe to unearth the entrepreneurs and their innovations that can solve the greatest challenges of our time. Visit them at <https://challengeworks.org/>

About World Resources Institute

World Resources Institute (WRI) is a global research organization with offices in Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Mexico and the United States, and regional offices for Africa and Europe. WRI's 1,700 staff work with partners to develop practical solutions that improve people's lives and ensure nature can thrive. Learn more: WRI.org and on Twitter [@WorldResources](https://twitter.com/WorldResources).