



Venice Challenge Press Release

May 2024



VENICE WELCOMES GLOBAL INNOVATORS TO ADVANCE LOW CARBON TRANSPORT AS PART OF \$9M SUSTAINABLE CITIES CHALLENGE

- **The City of Venice will host pioneering innovators from around the world to develop solutions that increase the use of low-and zero-carbon transport within the city.**
- **Venice is one of three host cities chosen as part of the Sustainable Cities Challenge, and selected innovators will have access to a share of \$3m (€2.78m) funding per city.**
- **Venice's Embracing Sustainable Mobility Challenge has been co-designed by the City of Venice alongside Toyota Mobility Foundation, Challenge Works and World Resources Institute.**

Venice, Italy (11 June 2024) - Venice has now kicked off its global call for innovators to put forward solutions that motivate people to increase the use of low- and zero-carbon transport within the city as part of the Toyota Mobility Foundation's \$9 million (€8.35 million) Sustainable Cities Challenge. Venice's initiative is looking for innovations that will inspire people to consider more sustainable methods of travel.

Made up of the historic city of Venice, as well as the lagoon islands and mainland urban areas such as Mestre and Marghera, the City of Venice is the capital of the Veneto Region. Most of the city's population lives and works in the mainland suburbs, with Mestre acting as a crucial transportation hub thanks to its roads, rail links, and airport.

Venice has invested resources into infrastructure that support the growth of sustainable mobility in the city, including over 180km of bike lanes, bike-, scooter-, and hybrid car-sharing services which was the first of its kind in Italy. In recent years, the city has invested in making its public transport system more sustainable with 30 new electric buses and plans for 44 more. The city also plans to launch 90 fuel cell buses by 2026 and by 2029, expects more than 32 hybrid waterbuses for its famous canal network.

However, according to a [2023 Audimob report](#), many people often use familiar transport methods and routes, meaning that these low- and zero-carbon modes of transport are currently underutilized.

As part of the Sustainable Cities Challenge, Venice is welcoming international innovators to develop creative ways to motivate individuals to rethink how they travel around the city and to

encourage greater use of these low-and zero-carbon options. The city is looking for ways to better understand the needs of commuters and local communities to create a transport system that not only works for Venice but also helps the city become more sustainable.

In addition to a share of \$3 million (€2.78 million) of implementation grant funding, participants in the Challenge will gain exclusive insights into a complex transport system that includes both land and water networks, as well as real-world experience of designing and delivering an effective and impactful behavior change campaign. Entrants will also have the chance to engage directly with city officers and other key stakeholders, including mobility providers, giving them access to potential future partners and influential decision makers.

Paola Ravenna, Head of the European Policies Department for the City of Venice, said:

“We understand the importance of making our city sustainable and have invested in a range of low-carbon transport systems for the people of Venice. However, we recognize that these changes cannot just come from building new infrastructure or creating policy alone. We need to find solutions that really respond to the needs of our residents and that is why we are excited to be part of the Sustainable Cities Challenge. We want to work with innovators from around the world to make sure that our city is ready for the needs of tomorrow.”

The initiative, spearheaded by the [Toyota Mobility Foundation](#) and designed in collaboration with [Challenge Works](#) and [World Resources Institute](#), aims to bring cities and innovators together to develop sustainable, inclusive, data-driven mobility solutions fit for the future.

Monica Perez Lobo, Director at Toyota Mobility Foundation Europe, said:

“Throughout this Challenge, we will be working with innovators from countries across the world to encourage the people of Venice to adopt more sustainable methods of transport. The solutions developed here could also be applied to other cities, encouraging a global wave of sustainable mobility.”

Kathy Nothstine, Head of Future Cities at Challenge Works, said:

“Making transport systems more sustainable isn’t just about developing new technical solutions. Understanding the needs of the people who use those systems is just as important. This Challenge is a unique opportunity for innovators from different disciplines to apply their ideas in a real-world setting and will allow them to see what really works and has an impact on how people use transport systems in cities.”

Ben Welle, Director of Integrated Transport and Innovation at WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, said:

“It is very exciting to see how innovators from around the world will respond to this Challenge and what solutions they will develop to help make the city of Venice more sustainable. This Challenge will result in real innovation which will benefit the people of Venice. But it is even

more exciting to think how these solutions could also be applied to cities in other countries to improve the lives of even more people.”

Venice is one of three cities to host City Challenges, alongside Detroit, USA and Varanasi, India. Over 150 cities from 46 countries around the world entered the Challenge after the call to cities was first launched in June 2023.

Detroit, Michigan, USA

Launched 29 May 2024 - Once known as the ‘Motor City,’ Detroit is looking to become a ‘Mobility City,’ seeking innovators who can help the city deploy clean and cost-effective mobility solutions as part of its transition.

The Detroit City Challenge is focused on Eastern Market, the largest food production and distribution center in the United States. Its growing residential and commercial presence means that the city wants to explore solutions that tackle congestion and pollution caused by freight, to improve the health and wellbeing of the surrounding community.

Entries to the [Detroit City Challenge](#) are open now.

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Launching 27 June 2024 - Varanasi is located on the banks of the Ganges River in northern India and is the “spiritual capital” of India. A revered pilgrimage destination, the city sees visitors from across India as well as abroad. This influx of visitors, while vital to strengthening the city’s tapestry of faith and culture, is leading to increased concerns about safety and crowding.

The Varanasi City Challenge aims to generate innovative, data-driven solutions incorporating elements of technology and design that make crowded areas of Varanasi’s old city (Kashi) safer and more accessible for religious tourists and residents alike including vulnerable members of the population.

The deadline for entries to the Venice Challenge is Monday, 30 September 2024 at 12:00 (UTC). To find out more, visit the [Sustainable Cities Challenge website](#).

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Notes to editors:

All spokespeople are available for interview and further comment.

For more information or to book interviews with spokespeople, please contact press-tmf-scc@89up.org

Three City Challenges:

- TMF Sustainable Cities Challenge Venice: Embracing Sustainable Mobility

- TMF Sustainable Cities Challenge Detroit: Transforming Freight
- TMF Sustainable Cities Challenge Varanasi: Coming soon (27th June)

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

Challenge Works is a global leader in the design and delivery of open innovation challenges that incentivize diverse innovative thinkers to solve pressing problems and unlock change. The most promising solutions are rewarded with seed funding and expert support, and the innovation that is the best or quickest to solve the problem wins the grand prize. This approach levels the playing field for innovators from any background or experience to apply their ingenuity for societal impact. Founded by Nesta, the UK's innovation foundation for social good, they are a social enterprise that has delivered 87 challenges to date and distributed more than £124 million to winning innovators. Visit them at 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 1,900 staff work with partners to develop practical solutions that improve people's lives and ensure nature can thrive. Learn more: WRI.org and on X (formerly Twitter) @WorldResources.