

Climate Piloting Opportunities



Climate Piloting Program at Governors Island

GOVERNORS
ISLAND
CLIMATE

On Governors Island, a growing ecosystem of partners is working to accelerate equitable solutions to the climate crisis.

The Trust for Governors Island's Climate Piloting Program sits at the forefront of this critical work, supporting companies to bring early-stage products and services to life.



Governors Island Climate programs are made possible with the generous support of Amazon, Con Edison, the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, and the New York Community Trust.



Piloting environments on Governors Island

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Harbor and waterfront, including a 2.2-mile waterfront esplanade, sea wall, revetment, and piers with access to the water.

Built environment, including 7 miles of car-free streets, 50+ historic buildings, sewer and water infrastructure, and more.

Natural areas, including urban forest, coastal shrubland, and biodiverse landscapes in a 43-acre climate resilient park.

Click here to download the [Site File](#)

Governors Island Climate Solutions Challenge

GOVERNORS ISLAND **CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CHALLENGE**

New theme announced each year

Who should apply?

- Startups, young companies, and nonprofits seeking to collect data in a real-world environment while also engaging with funders, investors, and customers.
- Project teams should identify a critical milestone that requires a temporary pilot site to support product development and deployment.
- Companies led by underrepresented founders and companies with 50 employees or fewer are encouraged to apply.

Selected piloting partners receive:

- **\$10,000 prize and access to supplemental non-dilutive grants generally not to exceed \$20,000**
- Receive access to a project site for 3 to 18 months with no fee, as well as technical support from the Trust as the sole owner and operator of eligible sites.
- Collect data in a real-world environment while also engaging with funders, investors, and prospective customers.
- Bring your climate solution to a high visibility public place with 1 million annual visitors.

Working in another climate sector? Companies may also submit a General Application on your own schedule. A year-round rolling application is open to all climate sectors. For General Applications, project teams are responsible for all costs. Learn more and apply online at govisland.org/challenge

Governors Island Climate Solutions Challenge

2026

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CHALLENGE ADAPTATION

APPLICATION DEADLINE

January 21, 2026

WINNERS SELECTED

April 2026

PILOTS LAUNCH

May 2026

Problem

In New York City and other dense urban areas, increasing chronic flooding, extreme heat, and water shortages have exposed millions of urban residents to hazardous conditions and costly disruptions at their homes, workplaces, and communities. Effective and accessible adaptation solutions are needed to create healthy environments and thriving cities, especially in frontline communities.

Challenge

How can urban adaptation solutions equip communities to stay safe and healthy, minimize disruptions to essential services, and improve everyday life for residents?

Innovation Tracks

- Innovative approaches to improve urban buildings, infrastructure, and natural areas for thermal comfort, flood adaptation, and healthy environments.
- Resiliency solutions for small businesses and nonprofits to minimize disruptions to critical operations from extreme weather, support worker safety, and facilitate a holistic response and recovery.
- Climate risk management solutions, including tools for affordable, accessible community-scale measurement and sensing.

Learn more and apply online at govisland.org/challenge

Evaluation Process and Selection Criteria

Selected applicants will be invited to an interview and site visit at

Governors Island. The Trust for Governors Island will evaluate proposals based on the degree to which the proposals meet the selection criteria. Technical experts may be consulted in an advisory role.

Selection Criteria

- **Quality of Proposal (40%)**
 - Clear and compelling
 - Sound methodology
 - Readiness for place-based deployment
- **Economic and Social Impact (30%)**
 - Climate equity and innovation
 - Business or organizational impact
 - Economic impact potential
 - Social impact potential
- **Project Feasibility and Program Alignment (30%)**
 - Makes good use of the physical environment
 - Makes good use of promotional/public education opportunities



2026 Challenge Timeline

- **January-February:** A subset of applicants may be invited to further evaluate fit and feasibility, including interviews, visits to potential deployment sites, and development of project workplans and budgets.
- **March:** Challenge winners will be notified, and the Trust will update the license template [here](#) to reflect the particulars of the specific pilot. Evidence of insurance coverages should be prepared according to Exhibit C in the license template.
- **April:** Approved piloting partners and the Trust will sign the license agreement, finalize project plans, and begin projects.
- **June:** Challenge winners will be invited to pitch at the program's annual summer showcase.
- **September:** Piloting partners will be invited to participate in the Trust's Climate Week event.



Challenge Prizes and Supplemental Grants

- Challenge winners will receive a \$10,000 prize for their unrestricted use.
- Supplemental grants will be allocated across the entire cohort of Challenge winners based on (1) funding availability and (2) demonstrated need for eligible costs of the selected project.
- Eligible costs may include professional services for pilot design, transport and installation costs, non-capital equipment purchased solely for use in the pilot, and other tasks generally shown [here](#) in Exhibit B of the license template.
- All prizes, grants, or other payments by the Trust will be issued according to the terms and schedule of the final executed license agreement.
- All program funding is non-dilutive.



Requirements

- Applicants must be incorporated as a legal entity.
- Applicants must be working on urban climate solutions (e.g., hardware, software, materials research, policy, or innovative business and financing models).
- Selected teams will be required to sign a license agreement with the Trust setting out the definitive terms and conditions of the program.
- Projects must be temporary, with a plan for removal at the end of the term.
- Projects must meet all local code, permitting, and regulatory requirements.
- Governors Island is a publicly accessible destination. Project teams must ensure safe and responsible deployment, operation, and maintenance of their project.



[Click here to download the License Template](#)

Testimonials: Accelerating Go-to-Market Timelines



Noemi Florea Founder and CEO, LÆRO Design Studio

2024 Challenge Winner | PILOT YEAR: 2024

ABOUT:

A small business founded in collaboration with experts across fields of water advocacy, manufacturing, and electromechanical engineering, working to reduce the levels of greywater contaminants that enter waterways and homes. On Governors Island, they piloted Cycleau, a compact decentralized greywater treatment system, at water refill stations and restrooms.

PILOT IMPACT:

“Following our pilot at Governors Island, we received multiple inquiries from customers interested in commercially testing our system at their facilities. These pilot opportunities likely brought down our go-to-market timeline from 24 months to just six months.”

SUCCESS:

Laero’s pilot led to their first sales to UNICEF Tajikistan, a water-scarce environment where greywater recycling can be a gamechanger.

Testimonials: Adding Value to Growing Businesses



Olav Skogen, CEO and Co-Founder

2025 Challenge Winner | PILOT YEAR: 2025

ABOUT:

Birdsview, a Norwegian company that piloted their ground-penetrating radar (GPR) structural assessment technology, which uses proprietary analysis software to assess the internal condition of buildings and reduces waste by optimizing the preservation of existing structures.

PILOT IMPACT:

"The Governors Island pilot was a pivotal step in Birdsview's international expansion, validating its versatility and market need far beyond Scandinavia. The project accelerated our commercial roadmap in North America, strengthened our product features for heritage and retrofit applications, and opened doors to new partnerships across the New York region. It confirmed that the global need for non-destructive, data-driven concrete intelligence is both urgent and universal."

SUCCESS:

Birdsview generated \$1M revenue in 2025 (2x their 2024 earnings) during their 6-month pilot.

Testimonials: Proving Out a Range of Business Models



Josh Mastromatto *Co-Founder and CEO, Rego*

2025 Challenge Winner | PILOT YEAR: 2025

ABOUT:

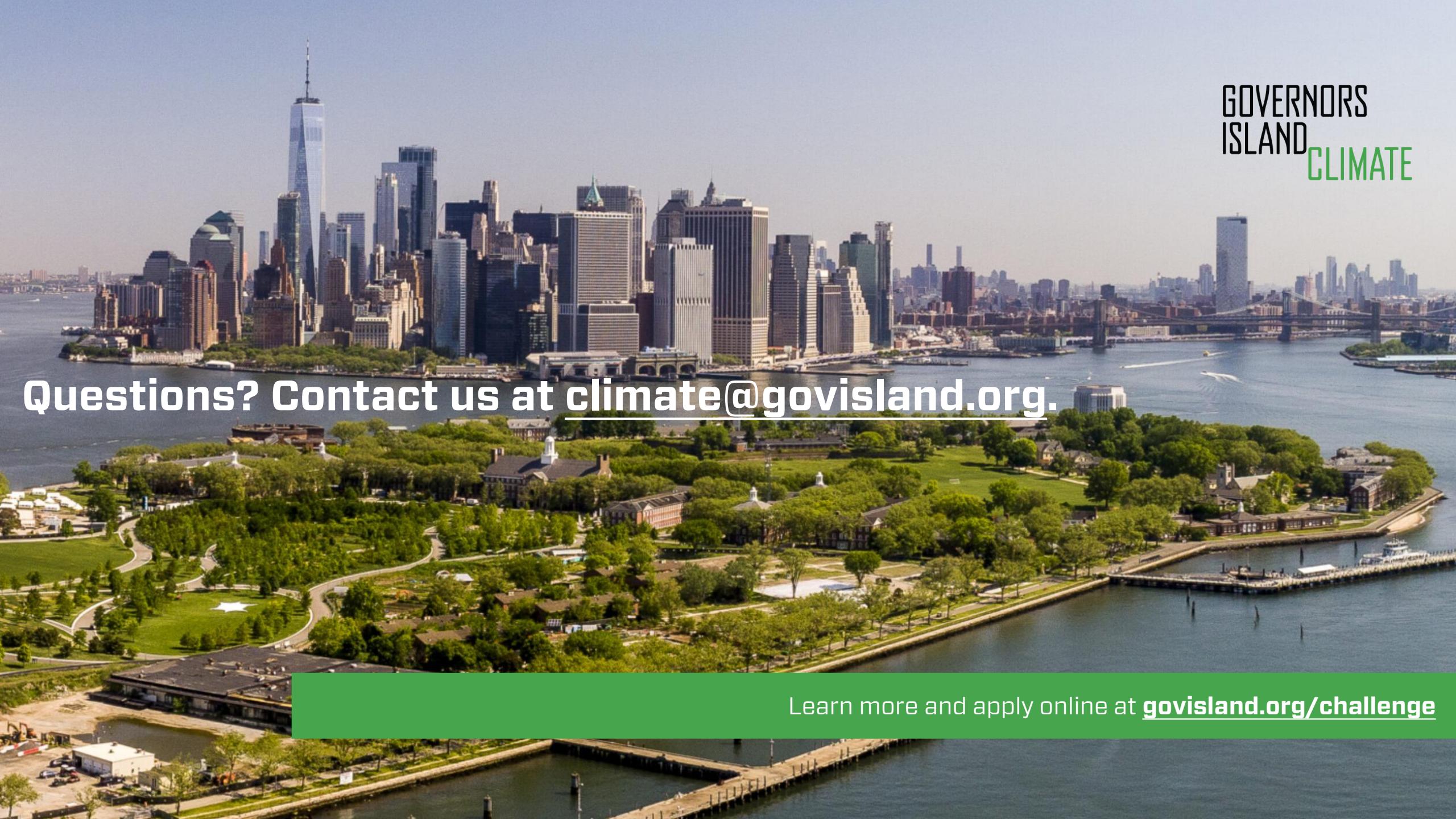
Rego, the digital utility meter for waste management, provides photo and AI-based waste audits to track and analyze waste streams in cities and increases diversion from landfills. Their pilot gave the Trust a clear picture of the Island waste stream using cell phone photos and a user-friendly dashboard, enabling our team to confidently make changes to waste management processes.

PILOT IMPACT:

“This pilot helped build a repeatable waste-tracking program that Rego could scale to other cities, municipalities, and businesses. The Trust helped validate Rego's ability to solve complex waste challenges and provided a public case study that gave new clients the confidence they needed to work with the Rego platform.”

SUCCESS:

Rego added over 70 new commercial sites during their 6-month pilot.



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Questions? Contact us at climate@govisland.org.

Learn more and apply online at govisland.org/challenge