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Contact: comms@elementalimpact.com

Elemental Impact Announces Winners of the 2024 “Build Better Innovation Challenge” With Microsoft, Capgemini, and Bouygues

Leading corporations award six climate technology innovators working to reduce emissions from concrete, steel and other essential construction materials

Honolulu, HI, San Francisco, CA - Today [Elemental Impact](#), a leading non-profit climate technology investor, announced the 2024 “Build Better Innovation Challenge” winners. In collaboration with [Microsoft](#), [Capgemini](#), and [Bouygues](#), the innovation challenge was designed to fund pilots for companies driving innovations in construction materials and processes. The six winners offer technology solutions to reduce emissions in producing concrete, steel, and bio-based materials essential for building construction. These solutions are especially relevant for new data centers being built to respond to both climate and demand goals amidst AI’s global expansion.

Elemental has led this Challenge as one of the many ways it is addressing the [\\$150B ‘Scale Gap’](#) - a significant shortfall of scale-up capital and expertise climate companies face during early-stage commercial deployments, which creates a barrier to the widespread adoption of proven technologies. Often, innovative companies can only overcome scaling and deployment barriers with investments and funded pilot opportunities from established corporate entities. These corporate entities can also serve as a project's first customers, which helps ease investors' concerns about bringing the product to market. Recognizing the key role of corporate partners in addressing the Scale Gap, Elemental has hosted seven similar challenges to date, driving accelerated pathways to deployment and commercialization for climate technology companies.

“As a non-profit climate investor, we are mission-driven to champion the needs of entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and innovators creating solutions that improve the built and natural environments all around us,” said **Mark Chambers, VP of Partnerships at Elemental Impact**. “Elemental is excited to rally our corporate partners as they open critical pilot, investment, and commercialization doors for these innovators to step through, accelerate their growth, and scale their impact.”

Winners were selected from over 75 applicants based on the proven abilities of their products and processes. Those selected have been offered opportunities to deploy funded pilots, access technical scaling support, and receive expert guidance on future investments. The Build Better Innovation Challenge winners include:



- [C-Crete Technologies](#) has pioneered a breakthrough pourable cement-free concrete product that absorbs carbon dioxide from the air like a sponge.
- [Carbon Upcycling](#) is a carbon and waste circularity company, enabling industries to transform their CO2 and solid waste into low-carbon cement products.
- [Néolithe](#) aims to reduce inputs to landfills and incineration plants, transforming difficult-to-recycle waste into aggregates usable in the construction industry.
- [WOODOO](#) transforms underutilized wood into high-performance, low-carbon materials to replace the most energy-intensive materials, such as concrete, aluminum, and steel, at a competitive price.
- [FROOT](#) manufactures green, corrosion-resistant composite rebars that drastically reduce carbon dioxide, enhance durability, and improve construction economics.
- [Made of Air](#) stores captured carbon in buildings through novel, carbon-negative materials and previously received an investment from Elemental.

Companies hosting the Challenge sought to identify solutions that reduce the carbon footprint of essential construction materials that play a vital role in building infrastructure, either by developing new low-carbon alternatives or by improving existing production processes to make them cleaner and more resource-efficient. The Challenge also highlighted the increasing demand for these materials, driven by the construction of new AI data centers, and the unique and complementary role AI-driven solution companies could play in accelerating the discovery of novel low-carbon materials for future construction.

“While lower-carbon building construction materials are on the market today, they do not exist at the volume, in the geographies, nor at the scale needed to decarbonize the sector,” said **Brandon Middaugh, Senior Director of Microsoft's Climate Innovation Fund**. “Through this work, we aim to maximize our potential roles as investor, pilot partner, and eventual customer to accelerate the market for these solutions needed by both Microsoft and the world.”

“Start-ups often come with very innovative solutions and are leveraged by Capgemini to effectively address our client requirements. It is crucial that large corporations continue to collaborate with and support start-ups in energy transition and climate tech. As many of them are capital intensive, their ability to issue quality carbon dioxide removal credits can also contribute to their funding and development,” said **Lucia Sinapi-Thomas, Managing Director of Capgemini Ventures**.

“Finding new and innovative low carbon materials for the future of buildings is a core priority for Bouygues group,” said **Christophe Liénard, Chief Innovation Officer**. “This is why Bouygues is thrilled to be a part of this action-oriented program. If other industry leaders are willing to take on the challenge of supporting pilot projects like this year’s winners, we can significantly reduce embodied carbon for the now and for the future.”

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About Elemental Impact

[Elemental Impact](#) is a non-profit climate technology investor with a 15-year history of investing in real-world solutions that make neighborhoods and homes cleaner, healthier, safer, and more affordable. With an active and maturing portfolio of 180+ companies, Elemental invests in transformative climate technologies with deep local impact, to create a systems change for a more resilient, equitable future.

About Microsoft

[Microsoft](#) is a technology company whose mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. From infrastructure and data to business applications and collaboration, Microsoft provides unique, differentiated value to customers.

About Capgemini

[Capgemini](#) is a global business and technology transformation partner, helping organizations to accelerate their dual transition to a digital and sustainable world, while creating tangible impact for enterprises and society. It is a responsible and diverse group of 340,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong over 55-year heritage, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to unlock the value of technology to address the entire breadth of their business needs. It delivers end-to-end services and solutions leveraging strengths from strategy and design to engineering, all fueled by its market leading capabilities in AI, cloud and data, combined with its deep industry expertise and partner ecosystem. The Group reported 2023 global revenues of €22.5 billion. Get The Future You Want | www.capgemini.com

Capgemini Ventures is part of Capgemini's approach to enabling its open innovation strategy: connecting the Group's large client organizations to a global ecosystem of innovation partners and start-ups, to create the most promising and innovative solutions for their businesses.

About Bouygues

[Bouygues](#) is a diversified services group operating in over 80 countries with 200,000 employees all working to make life better every day. Its business activities in construction (Bouygues Construction, Bouygues Immobilier, Colas); energies & services (Equans); media (TF1) and telecoms (Bouygues Telecom) are able to drive growth since they all satisfy constantly changing and essential needs.