

## CCBJ 2024 Business Achievement Awards

**C**limate Change Business Journal is proud to announce the winners of the annual CCBJ Business Achievement Awards for outstanding business performance and achievements in the climate change industry.

Congratulations to the 2024 winners and thanks to all companies that submitted nominations. An official awards banquet and ceremony will be held on April 3, 2025 as part of Environmental Industry Summit XXIII at the Coronado Island Marriott Hotel (Coronado, Calif.) from 7-9pm. The Environmental Industry Summit XXIII runs April 2-4, 2025 at the Coronado Island Marriott in San Diego, Calif.

This national two-day executive event is the flagship meeting in EBI's Summit Series and provides ample networking opportunities for environmental industry executives and analysts. EBI's Summit Series offers a opportunity to gain perspective on today's environmental climate change industries from experts, executives and peers. Regional events in Texas, Seattle, Washington DC and Boston are planned for 2025.

*Awards Process: In October-December 2024, CCBJ solicited industry, government, non-profits and the broader climate change community via e-mail, social media, its website, industry events and word-of-mouth for nominations for the 2024 CCBJ Business Achievement Awards. Nominations were accepted in 200-word essays in either specific or unspecified categories. Final awards were determined by a committee of CCBJ staff and contributing editors.*

## Executive Review & CCBJ Awards in 2024

*The annual Climate Change Business Journal Business Achievement Awards recognize innovation, commitment, outstanding performance, project planning, execution or key accomplishments and milestones in 2024. Climate change industry players need resilience as market factors and policy inaction conspire to make business challenging, but leaders and innovators prepare for 2025-2026*

*CCBJ Feature: 2024 data on emissions, energy and temperature combine to frame the continuing challenges of the energy transition & climate resilience; Atmospheric CO2, temperatures, global carbon emissions from fossil fuels and other indicators all reached record highs in 2024* 14-26

*AECOM Responds to Restoration Needs in Puerto Rico With Resources to Advance Nature-Based Solutions* 27

*Solar Incineration Investment Embodies Veolia's Applied Innovation Focus on Operations & Sustainability* 31

*SCS Engineers Continues Strong Growth With Added Focus on Climate Change & Renewable Energy* 35

*EA Engineering Wins Multiple Awards: Climate Vulnerability Assessments, Asset Management and a Climate Projection Assessment Tool Support Infrastructure Protection Across the Client Spectrum* 37

*SWCA Grows 20% in 2024 Paced by Advisory Services, Renewable Energy Engineering & Ecological Restoration, Remaining Flexible to Market Demands* 39

*Weston Solutions Advances Remote Site Assessments, Air Monitoring & Geospatial Data Integration With LiDAR, Uncrewed Aircraft Systems and AI* 42

*CIS Launches Advisory Services That Build Off of Water & Climate Expertise and Expanding Reach Into New Markets* 45

*TRC Invests in the Future with Multiple Innovation Initiatives; Climate Change, Disaster Response & Energy Transition are Key Focus Areas* 48

*Climate X Offers a Strategic Perspective on Recent Rollbacks of SEC Climate Risk Disclosures* 51

*Rincon Consultants Advances Climate Action and Resiliency Planning* 52

*EBJ Lifetime Achievement Award: Bill DiGuseppi, Jacobs* 53-58

## CIS Launches Advisory Services That Build Off of Water & Climate Expertise and Expanding Reach Into New Markets

CIS is a national leader in the development and implementation of public infrastructure solutions, focusing on improving the nation's infrastructure through solutions that drive local economic growth, reduction of public risk, and increased community investment and buy-in. CIS also offers related advisory expertise and services on topics including nature-based solutions, climate resilience, disaster prevention, green stormwater infrastructure, environmental finance, water affordability, and public trust. CIS is a very unique infrastructure delivery company that can innovate and scale effectively. Accordingly, CIS has overseen the implementation of hundreds of green stormwater infrastructure projects totaling over \$500 million across the Mid-Atlantic, Great Lakes and West Coast regions. In 2024 CIS, spun off from the Corvias Group in 2023, did over \$72 million in gross revenues, and over 90% growth from 2023.

*Sanjiv Sinha, is the CEO of CIS and a member of its Board of Directors.* In addition to his role at CIS, he serves on the Boards of The Water Council, a global hub focused on water innovation, and of NSF International Holdings, a global organization that tests and certifies food, water, and consumer products. He is also a member of the USEPA's Environmental Finance Advisory Board, a national federal advisory committee.

*Sri Vedachalam, leads the Advisory Services division at CIS.* A recognized expert in water and climate policy, Dr. Vedachalam has over a decade of experience addressing challenges such as affordability, aging infrastructure, extreme weather impacts, funding and financing, and non-point source pollution.

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*CIS received a 2024 CCBJ Business Achievement Award for Consulting & Engineering Partnerships and an EBJ Business Achievement Award for a New Practice in Advisory Services.*

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### CCBJ: Elaborate on CIS's New Practice of Advisory Services, and how these services differentiate from what competitors offer?

CIS: We leverage what we know well and are known for! In April 2023, CIS launched its Advisory Services division, specializing in water and climate issues i.e. markets adjacent to our asset management business. The goal was to offer our clients high-quality, short-term advisory services that leverage the firm's deep expertise in the water sector and the extensive network of its leadership team. Advisory services team also provide a means to new market entry where opportunities exist.

As a market leader in the water industry, CIS has pioneered community-based partnerships and performance-based con-

tracting to help communities achieve environmental, social, and economic objectives. In response to the growing demand for innovative financing and project delivery, CIS Advisory provides municipal leaders with access to top-tier talent.

By the end of 2024, the business became self-sustaining, attracting nearly two dozen new clients over eighteen months. These clients include notable organizations like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Washington State Department of Ecology, Cook County, D.C. Department of Energy and Environment, Water Council (Wisconsin), and Water Research Foundation. Nearly all the above wins were based on response to open calls (RFP/RFQ), an indication of the strong CIS brand in the market.

### CCBJ: What strategies does CIS employ to attract and retain government agency clients?

CIS: Again, we leverage what we know well and are known for!! Nationally, CIS has been a recognized leader in public sector infrastructure, having successfully managed hundreds of millions of dollars in projects across the nation, with a particular focus on distributed infrastructure. And given our size, we pride ourselves on being highly innovative, stick to our north star, are hard-working, and are well incentivized to drive meaningful change where we work—that's our simple but "secret" formula for success.

Given our size, we are highly selective in hiring staff who bring proven, extensive experience in the public sector. Networking with key decision-makers and staying engaged in industry events helps us stay current with trends and build essential relationships.

We place a strong emphasis on understanding and navigating government procurement processes, including RFPs and RFQs, ensuring both responsiveness and strict compliance with regulations, all of which are critical to our continued growth. By highlighting past successes and sharing relevant case studies, CIS builds credibility and demonstrates our ability to deliver impactful results. Our tailored solutions—focusing on cost efficiency and sustainability—make us stand out in a competitive market.

Finally, fostering long-term partnerships by offering continuous support and adaptability is essential for maintaining strong relationships. Ultimately, our deep understanding of government priorities, such as transparency and accountability, ensures that we deliver exceptional value while maintaining competitive pricing.

### CCBJ: How have CIS's Advisory Services evolved since their inception, and what have been the key factors driving these changes?

CIS: Our Advisory Services currently offer a diverse range of services, including climate resilience plans, landscape design, research and analysis, community engagement, services for water utilities, and additional consulting support. These offerings have evolved over time, driven by CIS's strong brand recognition, market demand, and the expertise of our team.

Initially, our early successes stemmed from responding to open calls (RFPs/RFOs), a testament to the strength of the CIS brand in the market. However, as our reputation has grown, we are now seeing an increasing number of referrals from existing clients and partners, which has allowed us to expand into new markets and broaden our reach. This shift towards referrals highlights the trust and satisfaction our clients have in our services, reinforcing our position in the industry.

As we continue to diversify our portfolio, our focus remains on tailoring solutions to meet the unique needs of each client, ensuring high-quality outcomes across all projects. The expanding scope of our services reflects our commitment to innovation and excellence in the consulting space.

**CCBJ: What are the current trends in the stormwater service market?**

CIS: The biggest trends in the stormwater service market are being driven by a combination of government policies, climate change, and rapid technology adoption. Decentralized stormwater management systems are becoming increasingly prevalent due to urbanization and the growing need for scalable, flexible solutions. This shift has led to the rising adoption of green infrastructure, with innovations like permeable pavements, green roofs, and rain gardens becoming more common as sustainable alternatives.

Government agencies are also seeking to streamline procurement by engaging turnkey providers, with states like Washington investing in technical support for commu-

nity-based stormwater partnerships, particularly for small and mid-sized cities.

Additionally, there is a strong push for water reuse and resource recovery, with more focus on capturing and treating stormwater for non-potable applications, helping to conserve water resources.

The market is also seeing the integration of smart technologies such as AI-based inspections, smart sensors, and cleaning robots, which not only enhance operational efficiency but also provide transparent, real-time data and reduce long-term costs. These technologies enable municipalities to better monitor and maintain infrastructure, making stormwater management more proactive and data-driven.

As these innovations continue to evolve, the market will likely see increased collaboration between public agencies, private companies, and technology providers to deliver sustainable, effective solutions. Ultimately, the drive for resilience, efficiency, and environmental sustainability is shaping the future of stormwater management on a global scale.

**CCBJ: Have there been any recent changes in the regulatory landscape that have affected your stormwater infrastructure practice?**

CIS: Nationally, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provided a temporary funding source to address stormwater needs, though those funds were limited and primarily focused on capital needs. Additionally, EPA's MS4 requirements continue to become more stringent, pushing municipalities and utilities to adapt. As a result, there is growing interest in alternative delivery models that promote cost-effective infrastructure solutions while offering social and economic benefits. At the state level, we are seeing increased funding and support for nature-based solutions through state revolving loan funds, as these technologies and use cases have proven their value over the past 15 years.

Furthermore, under the prior Trump administration, policies such as the Affordable Clean Energy Rule and changes to the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) regulation shifted regulatory approaches, which has influenced how stormwater management projects are planned and executed. Under the current Trump administration, we expect these policy shifts to continue to encourage flexibility in stormwater management, with a focus on promoting state and local innovation. These developments underscore the growing demand for new solutions in stormwater design, construction, maintenance, and delivery models—ones that can better accommodate evolving environmental standards and market conditions.

**CCBJ: Looking ahead, how do you see the stormwater market evolving over the next few years?**

CIS: Over the next few years, the stormwater market is expected to undergo significant transformation. As urbanization continues to increase and climate change impacts intensify, the demand for more robust and innovative stormwater management solutions will rise. We also foresee a clear tie-in of infrastructure spending that engages the local community workforce and brings economic development.

With federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act set to expire in the coming years (or modified by the new Trump Administration), there will be growing pressure on local governments and utilities to secure funding independently, unless additional appropriations are made by Congress. The integration of smart technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and data analytics, will enable real-time monitoring and predictive modeling, improving the efficiency and responsiveness of stormwater systems.

Green infrastructure solutions will continue to become mainstream due to their environmental, economic, and aesthetic

benefits. As regulatory pressures increase and the need for water conservation in many parts of the country becomes more urgent, sustainable practices will gain traction, leading to greater investment in the sector. However, challenges such as high implementation costs, regulatory complexities, and staffing shortages will continue to strain utilities. To that end, public-private partnerships and innovative financing models will become crucial in overcoming these obstacles. Despite these challenges, the market is poised for growth, but stakeholders will need to navigate these issues to fully capitalize on emerging opportunities in stormwater management.

### **CCBJ: How will your stormwater infrastructure practice change?**

CIS: Let's start with what will remain constant: our commitment to delivering solutions that foster local economic growth, minimize public risk, and enhance community engagement and investment. As noted, stormwater infrastructure business is experiencing rapid growth nationwide, driven by the increasing demand for climate adaptation, efficiency, and environmental sustainability. In response, we are focusing on sustainable, thoughtful growth, ensuring we stay aligned with our core values while remaining flexible in the face of change. We will continue to strike a balance between risk and reward to secure long-term success. A key area of growth is the integration of technology solutions and generative AI into the water sector, which we view as transformative tools for improving service delivery. We are committed to evolving alongside it.

Finally, we recognize the importance of effective storytelling to communicate why our unique business model is the best choice for communities and water utilities. In conclusion, we will keep making strategic investments while embracing Mark Zuckerberg's philosophy: "The biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that's changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks." 🌀

## **2024 Business Achievement Awards for CIS**

### **New Practice: Advisory Services**

CIS launched an Advisory Services business focused on water and climate issues in April 2023 that became self-sustaining by the end of 2024, attracting nearly 25 new clients over 18 months. Clients include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Small Business Administration, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Washington State Department of Ecology, Cook County, D.C. Department of Energy and Environment, Water Council (Wisconsin), and Water Research Foundation. Nearly all the above wins were based on response to open calls (RFP/RFQ), an indication of the strength of the CIS brand. CIS Advisory has quickly made an impact, providing support to underserved communities through an EPA climate resilience grant, assisting local governments in Washington State with pay-for-performance contracts, and supporting a Wisconsin water-energy consortium's diversity and inclusion efforts. Spun off from the Corvias Group in July 2023, CIS focuses on addressing outdated stormwater infrastructure. Through a pilot program in Prince George's County, Maryland, CIS created a leading community-based partnership, a model that integrates environmental, economic, and social outcomes, which has expanded to cities such as Kansas City, Milwaukee, Seattle, and Los Angeles.

### **Consulting & Engineering: Partnerships**

To address climate change, bold solutions are needed, especially for underserved communities, which are disproportionately impacted by climate disasters. Infrastructure investments can enhance community resilience while addressing historical injustices, building local workforces, and driving economic development. The Fresh Coast Protection Partnership (FCPP), one of the nation's largest community based public-private partnerships focused on urban green stormwater infrastructure, was launched in 2020 by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) and CIS. FCPP is a key step toward MMSD's 2035 goal to capture the first half inch of rain (740 million gallons) with green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). Key features of FCPP include:

- **Cost-Effective:** At \$2.36 per gallon, FCPP offers a lower cost than any other regional program.
- **Stormwater Capture:** FCPP will deliver nearly 11.5 million gallons of stormwater capture by 2025.
- **Private Finance with Zero-Risk:** CIS is using a Goldman Sachs credit facility to build all projects, assumes all project risks and ensuring taxpayer investment protection.
- **Private Property Utilization:** Exceeded the goal (60%) with 93% of GSI installations on private property.
- **SWMBE Participation:** Achieved 46% participation of small, women/minority based enterprises, surpassing the 25% goal.
- **Economic Impact:** \$61.32 million in community impact from a \$29.2 million investment.



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Industry*

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Environmental Social Governance*

*EBJ Vol XXXIV No 5&6:  
Environmental Industry Outlook*

**COMPANY INDEX**

AECOM 2, 3, 6	Jacobs 5, 7
ALO Advisors 39	Korea Airports Corporation 7
APTIM 2	LS Power 13
Arthian Ltd 4	MassBio 34
Avantus 12	Materials, Cyclic 13
Berkeley Earth 25	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District 5
Breakthrough Energy Ventures 11	Marstel-Day 7
BSI 37, 38	NSF International Holding 45
Burns & McDonnell 6	Oklo 12
CarbonCapture 13	Pace 8
CIS 5, 45	PBC 3, 10
City of Guelph 3	Pelican Renewables 8
Climate X 51	Port of Cleveland 7
ClimeCo 11	REGENESIS 11
Climeworks 6	Resilient Analytics 3
Deep Sky 13	Rhodium Group 17
EA Engineering Science and Technology 3, 10	Rincon Consultants 8, 52
EarthSoft 30	Science 3, 10
Fervo Energy 12	SCS Engineers 8, 35
Form Energy 13	Stantec 8
Fresh Coast Protection Partnership 5	SWCA Environmental Consultants 9, 39
GE3S 5	Terracon 4
GEI Consultants 6	Tetra Tech 9
GHD 7	The Water Council 45
Global Carbon Project 14	TRC 9, 48
Graphyte Carbon Removal 11	Twelve 12
Greater Toronto Airports Authority 3	U.S. Energy Information Administration 19
GreenLabs Recycling 34	Veolia Environnement 31
Heirloom 13	Veolia North America 10, 31
Helion Energy 12	Weston Solutions Inc. 4, 10, 42
Intersect Power 13	WSP 4, 11
	X-energy 12

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## COMING UP IN CCBJ

CCBJ Annual Business Achievement Awards

AI, Technology Disruption & the Demands of Data Centers

Trump 2.0 and the Aftermath of Executive Orders on Energy Policy