



Innovation Birmingham's Climate KIC programme partners with UKTI for study visit to China

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Innovation Birmingham's European-funded Climate-KIC programme – together with the West Midlands UKTI – is taking a delegation of low carbon SMEs to China. The visit, organised by the city of Tianjin, is designed to channel innovative solutions for reducing carbon emissions in China.

The delegation comprises the founders of five start-ups from Innovation Birmingham's Low Carbon Accelerator programme, together with two other SMEs in the climate change sector identified by UKTI West Midlands. The six-day trip commences with an official welcome and briefing from the Vice Mayor of Tianjin.

The focus of the trip is business matching sessions, organised by the Tianjin SME Association, attended by potential Chinese partners in the climate change sector.

Katharine Fuller, Innovation Birmingham's Senior Project Manager for EU Projects said: "It is very rewarding that the West Midlands region has been recognised as being a hot-bed for low carbon innovation. The fact our Low Carbon Accelerator programme nurtured a cohort of 30 start-ups this year has been fantastic for the profile and growth of local climate change initiatives.

"The invite to visit and strategise with climate change practitioners in the Chinese city of Tianjin will give the low carbon entrepreneurs excellent experience, as well as opportunities to develop commercial relationships. There is a significant level of trade that already takes place between the West Midlands and China, and the contacts made during this trade visit may lead to new export and import deals being struck."

The Low Carbon Accelerator start-ups that have been selected for the delegation are; bio-glue manufacturer Cambond; Civico Online Exchange Tracker, a waste prevention solution; Greengineering Ltd, which specialises in resource and built environment efficiency; GreenHill, a sustainability expertise consultancy, which specialises in carbon audits; JJ Bioenergy; and Unicorn Power Ltd, clean energy and environmental mitigation providers.

The outcomes of the visit to Tianjin may also feed into the Transition Cities project, which Birmingham City Council is currently leading on, together with seven other cities. The project's aim is to demonstrate how cities can develop effective low carbon clusters in energy, buildings and mobility, and develop challenge-led, outcome-focused programmes to maximise the impact of low carbon activity.

During July, £100,000 of initial investment cash was awarded across the top nine start-ups on Innovation Birmingham's Low Carbon Accelerator programme. The grant funding – circa £11,000 for each of the nine start-ups – is being used to pay for research and development, and other activity to enable the low carbon products and services to be launched to market in an accelerated timescale.

The Climate Knowledge Innovation Community (Climate KIC) is the EU's main climate innovation initiative, and was one of the first Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) created by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in 2010. The EIT is the European Union body tasked with creating sustainable European growth and jobs while dealing with the global challenges of our time.