

# A ray of hope for the 'death-ray' building

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A London skyscraper - nicknamed 'The Walkie Talkie' - which unwittingly projected scorching sunbeams onto the streets below(1) has highlighted the need for city planners to use a more integrated approach being pioneered by a pan-European consortium led by Birmingham City University.

The KIC-Transitions (KIC-T) project(2) will bring together data, modelling and visualisation tools to provide a comprehensive simulation framework that will assist urban strategic planning.

The integrated platform will allow cities to "plug-in" a wide range of information sets for analysis of key environmental impacts, including energy needs, [noise pollution](#) or [carbon emissions](#). The research has been announced to coincide with the British Science Festival.

"Designers behind the Walkie Talkie building have cited climate change and even the lack of [analytic tools](#) as potential reasons for the so-called 'death-ray' effect," said Professor Keith Osman, Director of Research at Birmingham City University.

"This has highlighted just how important our project will be in helping [urban planners](#) to better assess the impact such ambitious buildings will have when built in real city environments."

Professor Osman said the enhanced modelling capability being developed through KIC-T will allow [city planners](#), designers and city-dwellers to better understand the full implications of planning decisions.

He added: "KIC-T is defining standards and software to allow city data, models and visualisation tools to be readily plugged together, allowing more comprehensive models to be created which can be applied to cities around the world.

"Currently it is often extremely difficult to reuse or combine existing tools to investigate resource consumption, sustainability and assess the environmental impact and quality of life for citizens."

Dave Taylor, KIC-T Project Manager, said: "KIC-T has a real opportunity to make a significant contribution to city modelling and visualisation."

Katharine Fuller, KIC-T Project Director at Birmingham City University, said: "KIC-T will ensure that the results and tools generated by previous, current and future projects within the Climate-KIC can be made accessible to a wider range of users and cities, maximising the benefit of Climate-KIC investment."

Professor Osman added: "KIC-T demonstrates the commitment that Birmingham City University has to the wider sustainability and climate change agenda, and shows how we are able to provide some of the cross-disciplinary expertise required for these challenging topics with global significance."

The KIC-T project team includes Birmingham City University (Coordinator), ETH Zurich, Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, plus large international companies including ESRI and IBM, small companies like Aria, SBC and Greenhill and the three cities of Birmingham, Rotterdam and Zurich.

The Climate-KIC ([www.climate-kic.org/](http://www.climate-kic.org/)) is Europe's largest public-private innovation partnership, working together to address the challenge

of [climate change](#). The Climate-KIC is funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) which has a wider mission to increase European sustainable growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the EU.

Provided by Birmingham City University

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