

Shared victory in SmartSteel Innovation Challenge

A shared victory between Fraunhofer Institute IPM from Germany and Luleå University of Technology from Sweden, who both came up with ideas on how to trace steel products by using the materials own characteristics. That was the result of the SmartSteel Innovation Challenge 2018.

The SmartSteel Innovation Challenge was launched in September as a mutual initiative from Sandvik Materials Technology and SSAB. The idea was to use open innovation in order to find new ways to create future fingerprints for steel products.

The challenge attracted 26 applications in total, of which seven finalists were selected to pitch their ideas to an expert jury in the final round in Stockholm in December. The teams came from across the world, with representatives from South Africa, Sweden, Germany and Finland.

In the end, the jury decided on two winners, who came up with similar ideas, both very much in line with the SmartSteel vision. The winning teams were Fraunhofer Institute for Physical Measurement Techniques IPM from Germany and Luleå University of Technology from Sweden.

Tobias Schmid-Schirling, representative from the Fraunhofer team said:

“We are so happy for this – the team has worked really hard and deserve this prize. We are very excited about working with this alongside SSAB and Sandvik Materials Technology. This technology actually started as a way to identify fake products, and we already work with the automotive industry to mark small items. Taking it to the market on a larger scale will be the next step for this technology.”

Mikael Sjödahl, representative from Luleå University of Technology, said:

“Receiving this prize acknowledges in a very fine way the research I have been involved in for the last 30 years. I hope this will be the start of a positive and fruitful cooperation with Sandvik and SSAB.”

Niko Korte, Head of SSAB Digital Business Development, said:

“We are very impressed with the ideas of using the material itself as product identifier. These solutions are perfect examples of what we need to speed up development towards steel being part of the internet of things.”

Mattias Klockars, Head of Strategic Research Labs at Sandvik Materials Technology, said:

“These are both exciting research ideas that can be developed in coming projects. I am over all extremely impressed with all the finalist contributions.”

The challenge is part of the SmartSteel project, initiated within the Swedish national strategic innovation programs PiIA and Metallic Materials. It was organized together with Nordic innovation consultancy Spinverse, a firm specialized in driving open innovation ecosystems, and turning radical innovations to business.

The other five finalists were a team of Nortal Oy (Kari Juntunen) and University of Oulu (Jukka Kömi) from Finland; Cajo Technologies Oy (Niko Karsikas) from Finland; Altran Sverige AB (Steve Brown) from Sweden; Mitas Corporation (Kyle Parker) from South Africa

and a team of Oulu University (Aki Sorsa) and Tampere University of Technology (Susi Santa-aho) from Finland.

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