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Metals Innovation Initiative (MI2) Launches Global MI2 Competition to Source Pilot-ready Innovations

MI2, in partnership with Louisville-based innovation studio Render, launched a search for pilot-ready innovations addressing challenges in the metals industry on June 17. Competition finalists will present solutions to top industry executives at the upcoming [2024 KY Industry Conference](#).

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – June 25, 2024 the Metals Innovation Initiative (MI2) has launched a global search for pilot-ready innovations addressing challenges in the metals industry. The search is focused on priority areas identified by metals industry leaders. Innovators with solutions related to **automation, digitalization, product inspection, energy management, artificial intelligence, materials management /waste reduction, predictive maintenance/equipment sustainment, emissions tracking and reduction, and recycling are encouraged to apply. Applications are open now and will close on August 15, 2024.**

The Kentucky-based MI2 launched in 2022 to provide collaborative, industry-led executive leadership to attract and promote advanced research, sustainability, commercialization and talent development in Kentucky's metals industry. MI2 collectively represents over \$34.2B in annual revenue, and its members focus primarily on applications related to aluminum, copper, and steel.

MI2 enlisted Louisville, KY based venture capital firm and innovation studio Render, a B Corp certified public benefit corporation, to execute the global search for innovators. Render brings its experience in facilitating other large scale innovation challenges, including the Render Capital Competition, which to date has seen over \$4M invested into 40+ startups, and several Reconstruct Challenges dedicated to issues facing communities that include housing, employment, and healthcare. Reconstruct challenges have deployed over \$3.6M in grant funding to early-stage innovators resulting in 26 technology pilots and over \$60M in positive impact.

"We know startups because we invest in startups—we are literally invested in their success. This is a particularly enticing opportunity for founders because it focuses specifically on challenges facing an industry that has taken it upon themselves to come together and actively search for the solutions," said Patrick Henshaw, Managing Director of Render, PBC. "There is no better money for a startup than revenue, and the MI2 Competition puts startups in front of the people that can make that happen."

Ideal applicants to the MI2 Competition are early-to-mid stage startups with pilot-ready, scalable technology solutions willing to deploy their solutions in an industry environment.

"MI2's mission is to bring our ecosystem together to make Kentucky the destination for metals innovation," said Vijay Kamineni, CEO of MI2. "We want to attract the best innovations from entrepreneurs and researchers nationally to find opportunities and resources to pilot their innovations here in Kentucky, at the heart of the U.S. metals industry."

The MI2 Competition will be featured as part of the [2024 KY Industry Conference](#), hosted by [MI2](#) and its partners [GAME Change](#) and [Kentucky Association of Manufacturers \(KAM\)](#). Competition finalists will pitch their solutions to conference attendees, including metals industries' leading executives deeply invested in the next generation of industry innovators. Finalists will receive tickets to the conference and its events and be featured at a conference networking event.

Interested applicants should submit their applications to the web address <https://bit.ly/Mi2Application> before August 15, 2024. For more information, email innovationsearch@mi2ky.org.

About MI2:

The Metals Innovation Initiative (MI2) is a Kentucky-based nonprofit that provides collaborative, industry-led executive leadership to attract and promote advanced research, sustainability, commercialization, and talent development in Kentucky's metals industry—and, ultimately, for Kentucky to be seen as the preeminent destination for metals innovation.

About Render: Render is an innovation studio that envisions a world where opportunities outweigh obstacles. We partner with organizations to unlock new ideas to solve their most challenging problems. As a public benefit corporation, we default to impact while working towards human-centered solutions. We work together, for good. Learn more at workwithrender.com.