

November 21, 2024

For Immediate Release

Impact Capital Limited

Impact Capital I Fund announces its round lead investment in Aeronext

Impact Capital Limited (Shibuya-ku, Tokyo; Representative Directors: Chunmei Huang (Ozaki) and Sayaka Takatsuka (Miyabe); hereinafter “Impact Capital”) hereby announces that “Impact Capital I Limited Partnership” (hereinafter “the Fund”) underwrote the third-party allocation conducted by Aeronext Inc. (Shibuya-ku, Tokyo; CEO: Keisuke Toji, hereinafter “Aeronext”).

Aeronext, with its mission of “a new societal infrastructure for the 100-year life era, a world where enrichment is spread to every corner of the world.”, is a company providing solutions to social issues by utilizing next-generation drones. Aeronext provides a technology licensing business that offers its unique 4D GRAVITY® aircraft structure design technology as a licensing package, as well as a joint development business that undertakes joint development and development contracts for drone-related technologies. In addition, through its subsidiary NEXT DELIVERY Inc., Aeronext develops and expands its SkyHub® business, which aims to centralize and streamline regional logistics, and a drone operation business, which is executed by a team with leading-edge technology and skills, one of Japan’s best track records, and foremost know-how. The SkyHub® business has already been implemented in multiple regions in Japan, and is contributing to addressing regional issues in logistics, where regional logistics infrastructures face many challenges.

Impact Capital I Limited Partnership, established in May 2024, is a fund focused on impact investment (*1) in unlisted companies. The Fund’s mission is to “Pursue People’s Well-being through Impact Investing” and to contribute to the “creation of a vibrant colorful society, where diversity is recognized and choices are made based on individual’s value” (hereinafter “Theory of Change”), meanwhile aims to achieve both economic and social returns.

While the number of truck drivers has been decreasing since the late 2000s due to the declining birthrate, aging population, and worsening labor environment, the logistics industry’s labor shortage is expected to worsen further due to the 2024 revision of laws related to work style reform, which will lower the maximum overtime hours for automobile driving duties and tighten the requirement for periodic rest periods (commonly known as the “2024 problem”). Additionally, the shift to e-commerce, triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, will lead to a sharp increase in parcel deliveries. It is estimated that by 2030, about 40% of cargo deliveries, mainly in the Tohoku and Shikoku regions, may not be feasible. Maintaining logistics functions has become a significant social issue, and drones are expected to play a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency of transportation and delivery, especially in depopulated areas. The government is promoting the commercialization of drone delivery, having enabled “Level 4 flights” in December 2022 and “Level 3.5 flights” in December 2023. Furthermore, the government’s “Basic Plan for Disaster Prevention” incorporates the use of drones for disaster management based on the results of drone utilization during Noto Peninsula earthquake in 2024, and drone’s role in the construction of social infrastructure in the region is expected.

Through its business, Aeronext aims to establish a phase-free logistics infrastructure that can improve the working environment in the logistics industry while maintaining local logistics capabilities during normal times as well as disaster relief efforts. In addition, the drone’s low CO2 emissions will contribute to reducing the environmental burden on the logistics industry. As a result, it is expected to lead to “optimization and strengthening of logistics infrastructure” and “sustainable regional development” in the mid to long term. Ultimately, it will contribute to “affluent living with a sense of security” for local residents, which is in line with the Fund’s Theory of Change. The Fund has taken the lead in investing in Aeronext during this round. Furthermore, during the due diligence process, the Fund engaged in-depth discussions with the management team to introduce the “Impact Measurement and Management” (*2) process, where Aeronext visualized the social impact of its business through a logic model, measure impacts, and utilizes the results to improve management processes and business strategies.

Going forward, the Fund will continue to support Aeronext in developing its social and economic value while actively promoting the establishment of the impact investment ecosystem.

(*1) Impact Investment: Investments made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.

(*2) Impact Measurement & Management: IMM, or an iterative process that involves identifying and considering both the positive and negative impacts of business activities on people and the planet, and then finding and implementing ways to reduce negative impacts and maximize positive impacts consistent with one's objectives.

【About Aeronext Inc.】

Name : Aeronext Inc.
Date established : April 2017
Representative : CEO Keisuke Toji
Head office : 2-3-5 Ebisu-Nishi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
Business : Licensing business of industrial drone-related technologies, joint
Description : development business of industrial drones, new smart logistics
SkyHub® business using drones, drone operation business

[About the Fund]

Fund name: Impact Capital I Limited Partnership
Launched in: May 2024
Fund size: 6 billion yen (as of first close)
Fund term: 10 years
General Parter: Impact Capital I LLP
Partners: Chunmei Huang / Sayaka Takatsuka
Targeted area of investment: Focusing on “People’s Well-being”, the Fund invests in Career, Care, Living, Community and Environment sectors, aiming to create a vibrant colorful society, where diversity is recognized and choices are made based on individual’s value.

Impact Capital Limited

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