

October 14, 2020

DRONE FUND

DRONE FUND launches 3rd fund
to accelerate social implementation of drone and air mobility,
targeting final JPY 10 billion close
~ SMBC Nikko and DOCOMO joins as anchor investors ~

DRONE FUND, aiming for the realization of a “drone and air mobility-based society”, announces that in May 2020 it launched its 3rd fund, DRONE FUND III (Official name; DRONE FUND III Investment Limited Partnership) with JPY 10 billion for the final close, and has reached the first close in September 2020.

We would like to thank current investors including SMBC Nikko Securities Inc., NTT DOCOMO, INC., SoftBank Corp., KOBASHI INDUSTRIES CO., LTD., Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd., Leave a Nest Co., Ltd., etc. We will continue to raise funds toward the final close in March 2021 (scheduled), and with this announcement, will start new investment activities from DRONE FUND III.



<image> Current LP Investors of the 3rd fund of DRONE FUND (the others are disclosed)

【 Background of DRONE FUND III launch 】

Today, multiple social issues surround us globally, such as shrinking population, aging infrastructure, climate change, natural disasters, and epidemics of infectious diseases. Innovation with AI, robotics, and new mobility are highly anticipated to be the solutions of a new normal world.

Since 2017, DRONE FUND has been actively making investments to further realize a “drone and air mobility-based society.” Through the 1st Fund (JPY 1.59B) and the 2nd (JPY 5.2B), we have formed a portfolio of more than 40 companies from Japan and overseas.

A representative portfolio company from the 1st Fund is Autonomous Control Systems Laboratory Ltd., which was the first drone-based organization listed on the TSE Mothers in December 2018. The 2nd Fund expanded the investment focus to include “air mobility,” such as SkyDrive Inc., and leading overseas startups such as Aerodyne Group from Malaysia, and many others with indispensable core technologies that align with our vision. DRONE FUND has been leading the “Aerial Industrial Revolution” and “Air Transportation Revolution” in all directions.

Last year, the Government of Japan decided to shift policy goals, “lifting the ban of drone operations on Level 4, BVLOS in populated area” in 2022, and “starting commercialization of air mobility” in 2023. Local governments are also becoming active in responding to those movements. With these tailwinds, Japanese drone and air mobility-related startups are expected to make an even greater leap forward.



〈image〉 product images of some portfolio companies of DRONE FUND

【 About DRONE FUND III 】

DRONE FUND will run the 3rd fund under the concept of “social implementation of drone and air mobility, utilizing 5G networks and strengthening social acceptance.” Specifically, we will make investments in core technologies and a services which enable digital transformation of our society, contributes to remote-controlled and automated works, and accelerates the social implementation of drone and air mobility.

It is an honor to have three major telecommunications carriers participate as, and come closer to the full the development of the drone air mobility industry. DRONE FUND will continue to accelerate investment toward the realization of our vision while vigorously collaborating with current and future investors of the 3rd fund.



〈image〉 vision of DRONE FUND III

【Main investors of DRONE FUND (currently) 】

- SMBC Nikko Securities Inc. (President & CEO: Yuichiro KONDO, Headquarters: Tokyo)
- NTT DOCOMO, INC. (President & CEO: Kazuhiro YOSHIZAWA, Headquarters: Tokyo)
- SoftBank Corp. (President & CEO: Ken MIYAUCHI, Headquarters: Tokyo)
- Kobashi Industries Co., Ltd. (President & CEO: Shojiro KOBASHI, Headquarters: Okayama)
- Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd. (President: Satoshi HIJIKATA, Headquarters: Tokyo)
- Leave a Nest Co., Ltd. (Founder & Group CEO: Yukihiro MARU, Headquarters: Tokyo)

【 Profiles of general partners 】

Kotaro CHIBA (Founder / Managing Partner)

- Graduated from Keio SFC in 1997. After his career at Recruit, CYBIRD, and KLab, joined COLOPL, Inc as a vice president (2009–2016). Private investor with more than 60 startups' and more than 40 funds of venture capitals. As DRONE FUND and Chiba Dojo Fund's founder, and guest professor at Keio SFC, he explores the possibilities of “drone and air mobility society” with his HondaJet Elite and private pilot license, PPL.



Soki Ohmae (Co-founder / Managing Partner)

- Founded web consulting company, Creative Hope Co., Ltd, in 2002 (currently chairman), and since 2014 started a career as Dronegrapher®. In addition to a professorship of Digital Marketing at Business Breakthrough University, Tokyo, he serves as a co-founder and managing partner of DRONE FUND to realize a “drone and air mobility-based society.”



【 DRONE FUND III's overview 】

DRONE FUND is a venture capital specializing in drone and air mobility with the vision of a “drone and air mobility-based society.” Through existing funds, it has formed an investment portfolio of more than 40 startups from Japan and overseas. The 3rd fund will broadly invest in drone and air mobility, and technologies that contribute to their social implementation.

- Official name: DRONE FUND III Investment Limited Partnership
- Managing company: DRONE FUND Inc.
- Representative: Kotaro Chiba, Soki Ohmae
- Headquarters: Tokyo, Japan
- Established: May, 2020
- Business: Investment in drone and air mobility-related startups
- Website: <https://dronefund.vc>

【 Information 】

- DRONE FUND public relations: pr@dronefund.vc