

Press Release

Cool Japan Fund Inc.

Tokyo, December 8, 2014

Investing in a restaurant business to communicate Japan's incredible food cultures in major Western markets

Cool Japan Fund announced the decision to invest approximately 700 million yen and arrange a credit facility of 1.3 billion yen for Chikaranomoto Holdings Co., Ltd. towards the opening of Hakata Ippudo branches in major Western cities. This funding will also be used to establish “central kitchens” which would serve as development platforms available for other Japanese restaurant companies that wish to expand overseas.

Cool Japan Fund anticipates that this project will evolve into a model for other Japanese restaurant businesses in the competitive markets of major Western cities. Cool Japan's aim is to support the establishment of a wide range of Japanese food brands, including excellent sake, in addition to helping create a larger fan base and providing more support for the global expansion of the Japanese restaurant industry.



Offering ramen, sake and other drinks, and sides that include typical Japanese snacks.

The Sydney location operates under the “ramen dining” concept (Photo provided by Chikaranomoto)

Since last year, Japanese cuisine or “washoku” has received a great amount of attention from around the world as it was registered on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and it is expected that interest will continue to rise in the run-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

However, a number of issues must be resolved in order for Japanese restaurant businesses to expand their operations overseas, particularly in the West, due to differences in food culture, the cost of opening branches, and difficulties in employee education and procurement.

Hakata Ippudo first started in Fukuoka as a ramen restaurant. Since founding their first overseas branch in New York in 2008, the company has further expanded its operations, mainly in Asia. Their European operation, however, did not manage to flourish until recently. The first European branch was opened in London in October this year, and the company is looking into accelerating full-scale expansion into the Western markets.

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It is expected that “ramen-dining,” a unique business model created by Chikaranomoto Holdings to serve lots of side dishes adjusted to local food preferences, plays a key role in helping to spread Japanese food culture by distributing Japanese beverages like “sake” in international markets.

Chikaranomoto aims to share the knowledge gained from their global expansion with other Japanese companies by offering consulting services and hopes to contribute to the international expansion of the Japanese restaurant industry as a whole.

Through these efforts, Cool Japan Fund aims to establish a strong “Japanese Cuisine” brand, increase the numbers of Japanese food fans, and help develop Japan’s food industry.

[About Chikaranomoto Holdings Co., Ltd.]

Established: October, 1986

Business Domain:

Operation of Hakata Ippudo and other restaurants and bakeries, consulting services regarding ramen and other eating/drinking establishments, farming corporation, food production, operation of research facilities, operation of a flour-based foods facility, food education, cooking classes.

Location of Head Office: Yakuin 1-10-1, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka City, Fukuoka

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