

SoftBank Invests Additional \$7.5 million in Altaeros to Expand Low Cost Rural Broadband Connectivity

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Somerville, MA, August 8, 2017 — SoftBank Group Corp. (“SoftBank”) has invested an additional \$7.5 million in Altaeros to deploy and scale its aerial platform to bring low cost broadband wireless communications to rural communities beginning in 2018.

Founded at MIT, Altaeros is commercializing the SuperTower, a tethered aerostat that provides coverage equivalent to a network of up to 30 conventional cell towers. Altaeros offers wireless telecom carriers a first-of-its-kind tool to expand LTE and future 5G networks to rural communities at up to 70% lower cost, in half the time, and with significantly lower energy use than conventional infrastructure. The SuperTower, which deploys approximately 800 feet (250 meters) high, utilizes Altaeros’ proprietary aerostat design and automation technology that was first tested for renewable energy applications in 2012.



Image: Prototype Test of the Altaeros SuperTower

The SuperTower offers carriers a new infrastructure option that provides the broad coverage advantages of satellites and aerial platforms while also seamlessly integrating with existing handsets by using the same radios, antennas and permitting processes as standard towers. Altaeros offers the first cost effective platform to carry lightweight communication systems for temporary disaster relief or special events as well as full-scale equipment as part of a permanent rural network.

“After developing the world’s first fully autonomous aerostat, we are ready to deliver a product that affordably connects millions of rural users,” explained Ben Glass, CEO and CTO of Altaeros. “We are excited to continue our strong partnership with SoftBank to support our mission of enabling affordable, state-of-the-art telecom services for rural communities across the world. The SuperTower will help carriers connect the phones, cars, and devices of the future, wherever they may be.”

Globally, roughly four billion people still lack reliable internet access, and 1.5 billion lack quality mobile voice service altogether. Altaeros will begin customer trials of the SuperTower in 2018, partnering with some of the largest carriers in the U.S. and abroad working to make modern communication universally available and affordable.

About Altaeros

Altaeros was founded in 2010 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to develop the world’s first autonomous aerostat platform for the telecom and renewable energy sectors. Altaeros has received funding from a number of sources, including SoftBank Group Corp., Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Suhail Bahwan Group, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Science Foundation, and RNT Associates, wholly owned by Mr. Ratan N. Tata, former Chairman of Tata Sons. Altaeros is

headquartered at Greentown Labs, the largest clean technology incubator in the U.S., located in Somerville, Massachusetts. For more information, please visit www.altaaerosenergies.com.

About the SoftBank Group

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