

# Azimo Announces Strategic Investment from Rakuten to Accelerate Asian Expansion

05.05.2016

**Azimo, creator of the world's largest digital money transfer network, announces today \$15m of new investment, led by the Japanese e-commerce and fintech services company Rakuten. Azimo plans to use the funds to consolidate its position in Europe and accelerate its expansion into Asia.**

Asia is a region ripe for digital disruption. Already a huge remittance market, it's home to seven out of the top ten remittance-receiving countries, receiving over \$250 billion of remittance flows every year from its over 60 million migrants living abroad\*. One in seven Asian households benefit from remittances. In addition, Asia also has the highest global smartphone penetration.

Currently over three quarters\* of Asian transactions are conducted offline through banks or money transfer operators (MTO), and as a result, the cost for senders are very high: as much as 5-8% per transaction. Hence the opportunity for Azimo - its mobile-first, digital approach will offer a service that dramatically drives down the cost of every transaction to below 2%.

For those sending money back to family and friends in Asia, or soon the millions of migrants sending from Asia, the benefit of using Azimo is clear: more of their hard-earned money will get home.

Commenting on the investment, Michael Kent, CEO and Founder, of Azimo said:

"Rakuten's investment is fantastic news for both our customers and the Azimo team. Our focus has always been to transform the way people send money around the world, and we've been lucky enough to receive lots of offers of funding on our journey. While we weren't actively looking for additional capital, the approach from Rakuten really appealed because of their presence in markets core to our long-term ambitions. They

have a huge presence in Asia, they really understand consumer financial services and as owners of Viber, and are a significant player in the social messaging market. The partnership will accelerate our Asian expansion and assist in our aim of developing ever deeper social network integrations.”

Founded in 2012, Azimo was created to fix the broken and expensive money transfer industry, and make things better for the 70 million economic migrants living in Europe. After 4 years of exceptional growth the company now provides services to more than 190 countries in over 80 currencies. Half a million people have already connected to the platform and through its comprehensive network, Azimo can reach up to five billion people worldwide.

Azimo is already active in Asia – more than 30% of its transfers are sent to the region, with the Philippines and Thailand among the largest receiving markets. Now, with the help of Rakuten’s investment, the company can start focusing on outbound remittances from Asia as well.

“Azimo has cemented itself as the European specialist in digital remittances and its global network is unrivalled in the industry. This is a testament to an outstanding team, led by Michael and Marta, who saw an opportunity four years ago to disrupt the \$600 billion remittance industry,” said Oskar Mielczarek de la Miel, Managing Partner at the Rakuten FinTech Fund, who will also be joining the board of Azimo. He added: “Rakuten prides itself on being a catalyst for digital innovation. In Azimo we see a scalable business model, technical expertise, and a strong social mission we believe will make them even more successful in the future.”

Existing investors eVentures, Frog Capital, Greycroft, Accion and MCI Capital also contributed to this round of funding.