

Boeing invests \$10 million in TechnoCap, interested in YottaYotta

MONTREAL (CP) - American aerospace giant Boeing has turned to Canada for expertise in research and development, saying Thursday it will invest \$10 million US in a Canadian venture-capital firm that is backing several promising technology startups.

The investment in TechnoCap Inc. is Boeing's first such investment in a Canadian-based fund and is part of its strategy to expand its research and development capabilities, the company said in a release. "Boeing is investing in TechnoCap because of its particular technology focus and strong operational support of the companies it invests in," said Miller Adams, director of technology planning and acquisition for Boeing Phantom Works, the company's advanced research and development unit.

In particular, he said in an interview, Boeing is interested in Yotta Yotta, a three-year-old private Edmonton company that is developing a way to focus the efforts of many large computers on a single demanding task.

So-called "massively parallel technology" could be used by Boeing to design planes or other products, Adams said.

However, he added, it will be up to TechnoCap to decide where to invest the \$10 million US, which will be made available gradually over three or four years as performance targets are achieved.

Worldwide, Boeing has invested \$250 million US in venture capital since 1998. The Chicago-based company, which has its biggest operations in Seattle, currently owns four facilities in Canada, employing 2,000 directly, and supports another 30,000 jobs with suppliers.

Montreal-based TechnoCap has \$250 million in capital commitments from its various backers, of which \$100 million has been invested. As a venture capital firm, its aim is to finance early-stage private companies and help mature.

The 10-year-old company has previously received funding from the Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec, the country's largest pension fund, the Bombardier and Desjardins pension funds, the Quebec Federation of Labour, the National Bank and a number of wealthy individual investors.