



Leopard gets claws around advisory firm

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PRIVATE-EQUITY firm Leopard Capital Fund will invest US\$1 million in a professional advisory firm that provides legal and tax advisory services to clients in Southeast Asia, the company announced yesterday.

Leopard Capital, parent company of Leopard Capital Fund, did not disclose the terms of the deal or name the advisory firm, saying the transaction was “very sensitive”.

A statement from the company said only that the advisory firm would use the proceeds “to fund its expansion into new markets and improve its [management information systems].”

Scott Lewis, managing partner at Leopard Capital, would not comment yesterday on how much the deal could mean for his company, but he did say it “meets our return threshold for a relatively low-risk investment”.

“We don’t see a lot of downside risk,” he said.

The growth of foreign direct investment in Southeast Asia has and will continue to create demand for tax and legal advisory services, Lewis said.

“If there’s going to be a lot of investment in these economies, then they’re going to benefit a lot from that,” he said, as the investing companies will have “an obvious need for legal advice”.

Lewis said the deal was an obvious strategic move for Leopard Capital given how much it was already using the advisory firm’s services. “We were paying them a lot of money,” he said, “and so the idea dawned on us that they might be doing a pretty good business.”

He also hoped the advisory firm would serve as a source of business referrals for his company, he said.

Leopard Capital has invested in numerous Cambodian businesses including Kingdom Breweries, Nautisco Seafood Manufacturing and ACLEDA Bank