



NEWS RELEASE

# Coupang Announces \$84M in investments for Global AI Tech Startups

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Texas startup Contoro and Coupang collaborate on AI solutions to accelerate exports from the U.S. and other global regions

SEATTLE--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- U.S. technology company Coupang, Inc. announced today that it has invested more than \$84M in U.S. and global AI tech startups since 2023, one of many efforts by the company to redefine the future of global commerce through advanced technologies.

John Hughes, Head of AI and Innovation Policy at Coupang, and Youngmok "Mok" Yun, CEO and Founder of Contoro.

As part of these efforts, Coupang also announced that it is working with Texas-based **robotics**

**startup Contoro** to expand the company's AI-powered autonomous robots globally and is exploring plans for a potential pilot program at Coupang logistics sites in Korea and other locations.

Contoro's robotic arms excel at unloading boxes from shipping containers and truck trailers, two of the most commonly used options for global shipping. The investment is helping Contoro reach international customers, starting in Asia. Beyond its financial investment, Coupang is also sharing knowledge and operational expertise to help Contoro refine their technology for the Korean logistics environment.

The companies' shared work is aligned with the recently-signed **U.S.-Korea Tech Prosperity Deal**, which focuses on expanding technology ties between the two countries to strengthen shared national security priorities and accelerate research and development. As a U.S. company and retailer, Coupang operates in more than 190 countries and regions around the world, including Korea, where the company has significant logistics and



fulfillment operations.

“As a U.S. tech company serving millions of customers globally, Coupang is a vital bridge for economic and technological collaboration between the U.S., Korea and other countries where we do business,” said Harold Rogers, interim chief executive officer of Coupang Corp., during remarks at the **Semafor World Economy event** in Washington, D.C. “Coupang began as an American tech startup, and we’re committed to supporting the next generation of innovators that are using AI to drive economic growth, strengthen national security and redefine global trade.”

## Coupang’s commitment to AI startups

The company recently invested \$50M in the SBVA Korea Sovereign AI Fund, matching a \$50M investment by the Korea Venture Investment Corporation (KVIC). KVIC is Korea's government-backed agency that supports Korea’s venture capital ecosystem and is driving the “Next Unicorn Project,” a government-led effort to accelerate Korea’s AI and advanced technology growth.

This follows Coupang’s previous investment in the SBVA Alpha Korea Fund in 2023, which is supporting nearly 20 Korean startups across a range of technologies and sectors to help them expand globally. The company also recently invested in U.S.-based tech startup Tempo, a San Francisco-based company that is building Layer 1 blockchain for payments company Stripe, and Korean-based AI robotics company CMES.

## Growing AI innovation from Texas to Asia

Contoro is a small AI robotics startup based in Austin, Texas that launched in 2022 and currently employs 35 people across its Austin headquarters and Buena Park Deployment Office.

The company’s robots leverage an innovative human-in-the-loop (HITL) platform that combines AI and human intelligence, allowing human operators to remotely control the robots as they unload trucks and shipping containers. The robots use innovative grasping techniques that can accommodate a wide range of box sizes and weights, and have a 99% success rate in unloading operations. Deploying the robots in logistics environments, like fulfillment centers, warehouses, or at seaports can accelerate the movement of goods across supply chain operations, while also providing a solution to the global shortage of logistics workers, according to Contoro.

For Contoro CEO and founder Youngmok Yun, working with Coupang is helping bring the company’s technology to Asia-based customers, while also bringing his journey as an innovator full circle. Originally from Korea, Yun’s journey as a PhD robotics student at the University of Texas at Austin was supported through a scholarship from the Korean government and a grant funded by NASA. After graduation, Yun said his research received a grant from

the National Science Foundation (NSF), leading him to eventually launch Contoro.

“We’re excited to explore new pathways for Contoro’s global expansion through our collaboration with Coupang, another innovative American tech company that’s also investing in the future of AI and international trade,” said Yun. “By sharing knowledge and expertise between our companies, we’re focused on bringing our advanced technology to new markets where it can accelerate economic growth between the U.S. and other partner countries.”

Yun’s team has also developed a tool that allows Large Language Models (LLMs) to interact directly with the robots to help them learn new skills and diagnose performance changes in the robots’ machinery. They are then open-sourcing their findings so others in the robotics community can benefit.

## Expanding advanced technology globally

Coupang has invested billions of dollars in AI technologies, machine learning, advanced robotics, smart logistics, cloud computing and other innovations across its global operations, including billions across the Asia-Pacific region.

The company’s end-to-end logistics system leverages AI to forecast customer demand, optimize delivery routes, and automate the fulfillment process through driverless forklifts and sorting robots. These innovations have helped thousands of U.S. companies and brands, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), sell more than \$5 billion in American goods and services to customers in Korea and other countries in 2025 alone.

These capabilities are further powered by **Coupang Intelligent Cloud**, the company’s in-house cloud infrastructure platform that enables scalable AI training, inference and data processing across Coupang’s global operations, accelerating the development and deployment of next-generation AI-driven services.

Learn more at [www.aboutcoupang.com/innovations](http://www.aboutcoupang.com/innovations)

## About Coupang

Coupang is a technology and Fortune 150 company listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: CPNG) that provides retail, restaurant delivery, video streaming and fintech services to customers around the world under brands that include Coupang, Eats, Play, Rocket Now and Farfetch. It operates in over 190 countries and territories around the world.

Media Contact:  
[press@coupang.com](mailto:press@coupang.com)

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