

December 27, 2021

**Sojitz Corporation**

**Sojitz Makes Additional Investment in VLP Therapeutics, Inc.,  
a U.S. Developer of Next-Generation Vaccines**

Sojitz Corporation (“Sojitz”) will underwrite a third-party allotment of shares to invest in VLP Therapeutics, Inc. (Head Office: Gaithersburg, Maryland, U.S.; CEO: Wataru Akahata; “VLPT”), a U.S. biotechnology company conducting R&D of vaccines for malaria, dengue fever, and cancer.

Following Sojitz’s initial investment in March 2021, Sojitz will now underwrite a capital increase and provide business operation support to accelerate R&D, clinical studies and trials, and practical application of VLPT’s vaccines to treat cancers and provide immunization against malaria, dengue fever, and other infectious diseases.

VLPT was established in 2013 with the mission to develop innovative medical treatments that transform traditional vaccine therapies in order to address unmet global medical needs. The company’s founder, Dr. Wataru Akahata, established VLPT after serving as a senior researcher at the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) Vaccine Research Center. Utilizing Dr. Akahata’s proprietary platform technology of virus-like particles (VLPs) \*<sup>1</sup>, VLPT conducts R&D of therapeutic vaccines for cancer treatment, as well as preventative vaccines for infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, etc.

VLP Therapeutics Japan, LLC (Head Office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; CEO: Wataru Akahata), a fully-owned subsidiary of VLPT, is currently working on R&D of Covid-19 vaccines that utilize replicon (next-generation mRNA) technology\*<sup>2</sup> with the support of funding from the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development and the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2020 and 2021, respectively. VLPT Japan’ began a clinical trial for its Covid-19 vaccine candidate in October 2021.

Sojitz will offer VLPT its experienced support with commercialization gained through past business activities as well as Sojitz's seamless global network in regions with demand for vaccines such as Asia, South America, and Africa. Moving forward, Sojitz will support VLPT's global business development in order to contribute to advancements in medical care that support healthy living for people around the world.

\*1: Virus-like particles (VLPs): Harmless particles that have the same outer shell and shape of a native virus but do not contain any genetic material. Administering VLPs with the same shape as the target virus triggers an immune response for the body to create antibodies to neutralize the virus.

\*2: Replicon (next-generation mRNA) technology: A vaccine technology that enables mRNA to be amplified within the body through inoculation over a period of time. In comparison to current mRNA vaccines, replicon technology vaccines contain just 1/10<sup>th</sup> to 1/100<sup>th</sup> the dosage, making it possible in theory to manufacture enough vaccines for Japan's population in a short period as well as reduce vaccine side reactions.

[Related Information]

[Company Overview – VLP Therapeutics, Inc.]

Established	2013
Location	Gaithersburg, Maryland, U.S.
Representative Director	Wataru Akahata CEO
Main Business	R&D of vaccines for infectious diseases such as malaria, and dengue; R&D of therapeutic vaccines for cancer treatment Website: <a href="https://vlptherapeutics.com/">https://vlptherapeutics.com/</a>

[For questions regarding this press release, contact:]

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