

August 2, 2023

Sojitz Corporation

Sojitz Invests in VLP Therapeutics Japan, a Developer of Next-Generation Vaccines  
– Supporting Revolutionary Vaccine R&D and Vaccine Production in Kurume City,  
Fukuoka Prefecture –

Sojitz Corporation (“Sojitz”) has invested in VLP Therapeutics Japan, LLC (Head Office: Minato-ku, Tokyo; CEO: Wataru Akahata; “VLPT Japan”) through a third-party allotment of shares. VLPT Japan is a fully owned subsidiary of U.S.-based biotechnology company, VLP Therapeutics Inc. (Head Office: Maryland, U.S.; CEO: Wataru Akahata; “VLPT US”), which is engaged in R&D of vaccines for cancer, malaria, and dengue fever.

VLPT US was established with the mission to develop innovative medical treatments that transform traditional vaccine therapies in order to address unmet medical needs worldwide. VLPT’s founder Dr. Akahata has developed proprietary platform technology of virus-like particles (VLPs), \*<sup>1</sup> which VLPT US utilizes in R&D of therapeutic vaccines for cancer treatment as well as for preventative vaccines for infectious diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. As the Japanese subsidiary of VLPT US, VLPT Japan 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 (AMED) and the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

VLPT Japan believes it is essential to manufacture vaccines in-house for clinical trials to accelerate R&D of a variety of vaccines and to have a system established for quickly developing new vaccines in emergency situations. With support from the Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry, VLPT Japan is moving forward with the establishment of a vaccine production facilities within Kurume Research Park in Fukuoka Prefecture. Funds raised through this capital increase will be utilized to establish and operate vaccine production facilities and investigational vaccine R&D.

Sojitz has invested in VLPT US twice before and will now underwrite a capital increase to provide business operation support to VLPT Japan for R&D of the Covid-19 vaccine and other types of vaccines in Japan as well as initiatives to establish a domestic production facility. Through practical implementation of next-generation vaccine technology, Sojitz will contribute to the development of the biopharmaceutical industry in order to improve the quality of life (QOL) of many 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 with a small dose that creates antibodies. In comparison to current mRNA vaccines, replicon technology vaccines contain just 1/10th to 1/100th 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>

[Company Overview – VLP Therapeutics Japan, LLC]

Established	2020
Location	Minato-ku, Tokyo
Representative Director	Wataru Akahata
Main Business	R&D of vaccines for infectious diseases such as Covid-19 and flu
Website	<a href="http://vlptherapeutics.co.jp">http://vlptherapeutics.co.jp</a>

[Related News Releases]

“Sojitz Invests in VLP Therapeutics, Inc., a U.S. Developer of Next-generation Vaccines.” Sojitz Corp. Press release, 15 March 2021.

<https://www.sojitz.com/en/news/2021/03/20210315.php>

“Sojitz Makes Additional Investment in VLP Therapeutics, Inc., a U.S. Developer of Next-Generation Vaccines.” Sojitz Corp. Press release, 27 December 2021.

<https://www.sojitz.com/en/news/2021/12/20211227.php>

[For questions, contact:]

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