



PRESS RELEASE

Sosei Heptares to apply its Structure-based Drug Design Expertise in New COVID-19 R&D Program

- *New program to focus initially on inhibitors of SARS-CoV-2 protease, a protein essential for the viral life cycle*
- *SBDD capabilities will also be contributed to broader discovery collaborations seeking novel drugs against SARS-CoV-2*
- *All findings to be made freely available to the global research community seeking treatments to COVID-19*

Tokyo, Japan and London, UK, 14 April 2020 – Sosei Group Corporation (“the Company”; TSE: 4565) today announces it will apply its unique structure-based drug design platform and capabilities to the global research efforts to discover drugs targeting the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and to treat COVID-19.

The Company has initiated a new R&D program to identify novel compounds that block the activity of the SARS-CoV-2 M^{Pro} protease (Nsp5), which has been designated as an important potential target for drug development¹⁻⁴. The M^{Pro} protease cleaves a polyprotein encoded by the viral genome into 12 non-structural proteins (Nsp4-Nsp16) some of which play crucial roles in viral replication¹⁻⁴.

The Company has created a multidisciplinary team spanning structural and biophysical analysis, computational chemistry and medicinal chemistry. The team brings a wealth of experience in SBDD and cutting-edge technologies that will be applied to the precision design of new inhibitor compounds against not only the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus but also against predicted future variants.

All findings from the program will be made freely available to the global research community investigating solutions to the COVID-19 crisis.

Sosei Heptares is looking to establish collaborations with industry partners to support this program and also to contribute its unique expertise to other areas under investigation as part of the global effort by the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries to find new treatments for COVID-19.

Malcolm Weir, Executive Vice Chairman of Sosei Heptares, commented: “The COVID-19 pandemic has brought together the biomedical R&D community like never before. It has created a strong industry-wide effort to direct innovative and powerful technologies to develop diagnostics and therapies against the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, with the intention of controlling the current COVID-19 situation as well as potentially to prevent future epidemics and pandemics. We are confident that Sosei Heptares can play an important part in these efforts and that our unique

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SBDD capabilities can make a difference as part of our new program and more broadly in collaboration with industry partners.”

The Company has created a covid19@soseiheptares.com contact address for companies and researchers who would like to discuss possible collaborations.

There is no material impact to the Company’s financial statements by investing in this important not-for-profit research initiative.

References

1. R. Hilgenfeld, *Febs J.* (2014), 281, 4085-4096
2. T. Pillaiyar, *et al, J. Med. Chem.* (2016), 59, 6595-6628
3. L. Zhang, *et al, Science* (2020) [DOI: 10.1126/science.abb3405](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abb3405)
4. Z. Jin, *et al, Nature* (2020) [DOI: 10.1038/s41586-020-2223-y](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2223-y)

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About Sosei Heptares

We are an international biopharmaceutical group focused on the discovery and early development of new medicines originating from our proprietary GPCR-targeted StaR® technology and structure-based drug design platform capabilities. We are advancing a broad and deep pipeline of novel medicines across multiple therapeutic areas, including CNS, immuno-oncology, gastroenterology, inflammation and other rare/specialty indications.

We have established partnerships with some of the world’s leading pharmaceutical companies, including Allergan, AstraZeneca, Daiichi-Sankyo, Genentech (Roche), Novartis, Pfizer and Takeda; and with innovative biotechnology companies, including Kymab, MorphoSys and PeptiDream. Sosei Heptares is headquartered in Tokyo, Japan with R&D facilities in Cambridge, UK.

“Sosei Heptares” is the corporate brand of Sosei Group Corporation, which is listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange (ticker: 4565). Sosei, Heptares, the logo and StaR® are Trade Marks of Sosei Group companies.

For more information, please visit <https://www.soseiheptares.com/>
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Forward-looking statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements, including statements about the discovery, development and commercialization of products. Various risks may cause Sosei Group Corporation's actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements, including: adverse results in clinical development programs; failure to obtain patent protection for inventions; commercial limitations imposed by patents owned or controlled by third parties; dependence upon strategic alliance partners to develop and commercialize products and services; difficulties or delays in obtaining regulatory approvals to market products and services resulting from development efforts; the requirement for substantial funding to conduct research and development and to expand commercialization activities; and product initiatives by competitors. As a result of these factors, prospective investors are cautioned not to rely on any forward-looking statements. We disclaim any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.