



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **HypoPet led consortium receives top ranking and funding from Eurostars Program for the research and development of a vaccine for African Swine Fever.**

**Zürich Switzerland 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2020 – HypoPet AG today announced the ASF-INNOVAC consortium in which it is the lead SME was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> among 378 funding applications and will thus receive funding for 3 years to research and develop a vaccine against the African Swine Fever; one of the most serious infectious diseases affecting commercial livestock worldwide.**

African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious and lethal haemorrhagic viral disease of domestic and wild pigs which causes serious economic and production losses. In the last 13 years, over 200 million pigs died worldwide from the disease. In 2018, China, the largest swine producer with 440 million pigs, reduced their domestic herd by 40% because of an ASF outbreak. The infectious agent for ASF is the *Asfarviridae* virus which is transmitted by ticks or by feeding blood products from infected animals to healthy ones. To date there is no effective vaccine available for disease prevention.

The successful ASF-INNOVAC consortium includes HypoPet AG, the Laboratory of Immunology at the Swiss Institute of Virology and Immunology (IVI), the Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre (BMC) and BISC Global. The partners will combine their expertise in VLP technologies, bioinformatics and artificial intelligence, antigen display, immune response expertise, pig immunology and biological safety facilities, to select the required antigens and engineer and test a safe and effective vaccine against ASFV. By completion of the project, the consortium aims to deliver proof of concept for an ASFV vaccine validated in the target species that is ready for large-scale validation in pigs and commercial partnering to deliver full clinical validation.

The Eurostars Program is a European joint program dedicated to R&D performing SMEs, and co-funded by the European Communities and 36 EUREKA member countries. Eurostars aims to stimulate these SMEs to lead international collaborative research and innovation projects by easing access to support and funding. It is fine-tuned to focus on the needs of SMEs, and specifically targets the development of new products, processes and services and the access to transnational and international markets.

Dr Martin F. Bachmann, CSO of HypoPet AG, commented, “We are most thankful to receive R&D support from Eurostars for this exciting project. Furthermore, we are pleased to be ranked 1<sup>st</sup> amongst all the applicants; I believe a reflection of the quality of the scientists involved in the consortium and the urgent need to develop a vaccine against African swine fever and protect against its dire economic consequences. The successful application also demonstrates the potential and versatility of our VLP platform technologies which can be used as therapeutic vaccines against chronic disease in companion animals and for prophylactic vaccines.

#### **For further information, please contact**

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#### **About HypoPet AG**

HypoPet AG is a privately held Swiss biotechnology company based in Zürich, Switzerland that was formed as a spin-off company from the University of Zürich in 2013. HypoPet is developing therapeutic virus-like particle (VLP) vaccines (VLP) designed to instruct the patient’s immune system to produce antibodies which specifically neutralize disease-associated molecules within the animal and thereby modulate chronic disease processes<sup>2</sup>. Taking advantage of the flexibility of the platform VLP vaccine technology, HypoPet is establishing a



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high-quality pipeline filled with promising new animal drug candidates that address major unmet needs in veterinary medicine. The remarkable advances achieved in the treatment of chronic human diseases by the use of monoclonal antibodies can now be made available to our pets by the use of pet-specific vaccines. HypoPet is leveraging the experience of monoclonal antibodies, which have already achieved proof of principle (efficacy, safety & commercial) in humans and in some cases in companion animals. HypoPet's VLP platforms are also being used to develop vaccines against infectious diseases.

### **Forward looking statement**

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