

## Canadian Coalition Fosters Global Collaboration in Fight Against COVID-19

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VANCOUVER

A group of Canadian biotech companies are joining forces in the war on COVID-19 with a unique open source model using next-generation antidotes known as nanobodies<sup>1</sup>.

“We’re donating our resources to develop custom nanobodies for others to use,” says Hamlet Abnoui, CEO and Co-founder of NovoBind Livestock Technologies (NovoBind), who initiated the collaboration. “It is our hope that others will take our work to create diagnostics and therapeutics.”

The coalition of five companies will adopt an “open source biology” model (similar to open source software) to make and disseminate their findings, encouraging the biological version of crowd sourcing.

Abnoui and his team recognized their potential to help after reading several peer-reviewed publications that clearly demonstrated the strong neutralizing effect of nanobodies on MERS, a member of the coronavirus family.

NovoBind will identify and share the nanobodies, which “stick” to and neutralize pathogens. The World Health Organization’s recent list of experimental therapies, which includes conventional antibodies as well as the nanobodies, confirms their thinking.

“Our staff, Board, shareholders, and advisors immediately agreed that we had to do something to help,” says Abnoui, whose company is one of only a few that specialize in this area. The intent is to ensure the potential of their technology for COVID-19 applications is accessible to everyone around the world, irrespective of their capacity to pay for breakthrough medications. NovoBind will not seek any financial benefit from this effort.

The coalition is focused on nanobodies due to their ability to act like guided missiles to specifically identify and stick to the coronavirus. Because nanobodies envelope the virus, they can be used to create diagnostic tools to detect the virus, or therapeutics to effectively neutralize it. Full details of the approach can be found at [www.novobind.com](http://www.novobind.com).

Partnering with NovoBind in this coalition are SignalChem, who will create the synthetic version of the viral targets; and Cedarlane, who will facilitate the generation of the antibodies. Leading law firm, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, will advise on the intellectual property strategy to ensure that the resulting products are accessible to all countries around the world. Natural Products Canada will support knowledge transfer to ensure developments from this initiative are integrated in global efforts against COVID-19.

Abnoui is heartened by the progress and creativity exhibited by many other research teams and hopes this coalition can add to their arsenal. “We’re really proud to see trusted companies come together so quickly and enthusiastically to drive a critical solution.”

### FOR MORE INFO

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<sup>1</sup> Trademarked by Ablynx, otherwise known as single domain antibodies, llama antibodies, VHH, VNAR

### **Cedarlane**

The company offers a myriad of biologicals and biochemicals to Life Science researchers and clinicians providing products from virtually all of the World's most renowned international manufacturers. Cedarlane provides a gateway to over two million global reagents. Customers have the advantage of freight consolidation and the convenience and cost savings inherent within. Manufactured products include monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies, cell separation media, complement for tissue typing, and highly characterized neuronal cell lines. Visit <http://www.cedarlanelabs.com>

### **Natural Products Canada**

Natural Products Canada (NPC) is the driving force behind Canada's Natural Product Innovation Cluster-a strategic community of SMEs, research institutes, corporations, investors, government departments, and service providers who support the development and commercialization of naturally-derived products and technologies in health and life sciences, natural resources, agriculture and agri-food, and sustainable bioproducts. NPC has over 600 opportunities in its pipeline, has completed ten investments, and has already experienced two exits. Visit [www.naturalproductscanada.com](http://www.naturalproductscanada.com)

### **NovoBind Livestock Technologies**

NovoBind Livestock Technologies develops products that meet the growing global demand for increased food production without the use of antibiotics and antimicrobial chemicals. Their next-generation biologics target and neutralize devastating pathogenic bacteria, viruses, and parasites that cause \$22 billion (USD) in aggregate annual loss to producers in the poultry, shrimp, and companion animal sectors. NovoBind is currently expanding its technology platform to address other sectors of food production, including crop health. Visit [www.novobind.com](http://www.novobind.com), [covid@novobind.com](mailto:covid@novobind.com)

### **SignalChem Lifesciences Corporation**

SignalChem Lifesciences Corporation is a Canadian company focused on the research, development, and production of innovative and high-quality human recombinant cell signaling products. SignalChem strives to support scientists in academia, pharma, and biotech companies around the world by creating effective research tools to advance the basic research in life sciences and to facilitate the efforts in drug discovery and development. Visit [www.signalchem.com](http://www.signalchem.com), [info@signalchem.com](mailto:info@signalchem.com)

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