

3 September 2024

**Aptamer Group plc**  
**("Aptamer", the "Company" or the "Group")**  
**Aptamer extends contract with Unilever to progress Optimer for deodorant development**

- Lab-test results of Optimer indicate good applicability in deodorant products
- Contract extended to allow next phase of development in partnership
- Plans to initiate *in-vivo* efficacy testing with Optimer in 2024

Aptamer Group plc (AIM: APTA), the developer of novel Optimer<sup>®</sup> binders to enable innovation in the life sciences industry, is pleased to announce an extension of its partnership with Unilever to enter a new phase aimed at initiating *in-vivo* efficacy testing of Optimer binders as active ingredients in deodorants.

Initiated in 2022, the partnership between Aptamer and Unilever aims to develop Optimer binders as part of novel deodorant products. The current market value for deodorants is in excess of 21 billion per annum and growing at 4.5% (CAGR for the next 5 years). Unilever is the leader in the deodorant market, with over 30% market share - an increase of over 20% compared to its nearest competitor. The use of active ingredients such as Optimer binders within deodorant products is highly novel within the market and holds the potential for enhanced efficacy for consumer products.

The current contract extension follows successful lab-based tests of the Optimer binders and allows the partnership to progress to planned *in-vivo* activity studies for the Optimer binders before the end of 2024. Aptamer Group successfully developed the Optimer binders, targeting the C-S Lyase bacterial enzyme, which is critical in the generation of axillary odour. The binders have undergone extensive laboratory testing at both Aptamer's and Unilever's facilities, demonstrating consistent and effective inhibition of the enzyme. This progress signifies the potential application of the Optimers in deodorant products. Additionally, Aptamer Group has refined these binders to enhance their efficacy as potential active ingredients and to improve their manufacturability for Unilever's production processes.

Unilever will continue to progress the developed Optimer binders through rigorous internal testing. It plans to initiate *in-vivo* efficacy studies before the end of 2024. A successful outcome from these trials will then lead to next steps in the partnership.

**Dr Arron Tolley, Chief Executive Officer of Aptamer Group, said:** "The continued advancement of our Optimer binders in collaboration with Unilever is a significant milestone for Aptamer Group. It showcases the versatility of our technology in providing unique solutions across new sectors, including cosmetics. We have collaborated closely with Unilever to develop these binders, and we are excited to see the strides being made towards their use in these novel deodorant applications. With efficacy testing on the horizon, we are optimistic about bringing these binders to market in the coming years and look forward to discussing commercial opportunities with Unilever upon successful trial outcomes."

**Dr Sam Samaras, Senior Vice President R&D, Unilever:** This contract extension with Aptamer Group reflects the positive nature of the data generated thus far. This is the first time that Unilever has examined the impact of Optimer binders in cosmetic applications and the data so far have shown encouraging results. We will now progress to *in-vivo* testing of the developed materials to examine their impact, fully formulated, using our state-of-the-art in-house panel of experts. This utilisation of Optimers in the cosmetic space represents a novel application for this class of materials and we will continue to engage with the world class team at Aptamer Group to explore additional opportunities.

- ENDS -

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**About Aptamer Group plc**

Aptamer Group develops custom affinity binders through its proprietary Optimer<sup>®</sup> platform to enable new approaches in therapeutics, diagnostics, and research applications. The Company strives to deliver transformational solutions that meet the needs of life science researchers and developers.

Optimer binders are oligonucleotide affinity ligands that can function as an antibody alternative. The global affinity ligand market is currently worth over 170 billion

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Aptamer has successfully delivered projects for a range of global pharma companies, diagnostic development companies, and research institutes, covering multiple application areas with the objective of establishing royalty-bearing licenses.

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