Press release

StemSight selected for competitive program introducing global high-potential biomedical startups to Japan

Selected as Finland's sole representative in JETRO's inaugural program, StemSight will further explore commercialisation opportunities for its off-the-shelf stem cell therapies for curing blindness in Japan's regenerative medicine ecosystem.

TAMPERE, Finland (February 19th, 2026) StemSight, a Finnish biotechnology company developing off-the-shelf regenerative cell therapies for curing blindness, today announced its selection to the Japan Entry Acceleration Program (JEAP) operated by the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO). StemSight is the only Finnish company chosen as one of 10 international startups from nearly 70 applicants across the world for the 2026 program.

JEAP is the first acceleration program launched by JETRO's government-backed J-Bridge initiative, which introduces high-potential overseas startups to Japan's pharmaceutical, investment, clinical, and manufacturing ecosystems. By participating in the program, StemSight will receive extensive market entry support, regulatory guidance, connections for clinical development, and access to some of Japan's leading contract development and manufacturing organisations (CDMOs). Additionally, participation will open up new opportunities for establishing commercial partnerships with Japanese pharmaceutical companies.

Participation in the JEAP program will culminate in a Tokyo Demo Day in February 2026, where StemSight will present its technology to Japanese pharmaceutical companies, investors, and potential strategic partners.

"Japan is the birthplace of iPS cell technology and a pioneer in translation of regenerative medicine from the lab to patients. As we now prepare to take our first product to the clinic, participation in this program is especially timely. As founder of StemSight, building a company while raising a young family, it is a special honour to be selected for JETRO's Japan Entry Acceleration Program," said StemSight CEO and Co-Founder **Laura Koivusalo**.

"I couldn't miss the opportunity to engage with one of the world's most advanced biotech innovation ecosystems. It is an important step on our journey to bring cures to patients suffering from blindness across the world."

While still partly on parental leave, Koivusalo will travel to Tokyo with family, including her infant child.

Japan's regulatory framework offers accelerated pathways to market for biotech startups like StemSight. Forward-thinking legislation such as the PMD Act allows for conditional, time-limited

market approvals for regenerative medicines based on early safety and likely efficacy. This system helps reduce review times and provides a specialised regulatory pathway for cell and gene therapies.

StemSight develops scalable, off-the-shelf cell therapies using induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cell technology to address severe forms of blindness. The company's lead program targets limbal stem cell deficiency (LSCD), a rare and currently untreatable cause of corneal blindness.

Unlike treatments that use cells from tissue extracted from a patient's healthy eye, StemSight's proprietary technology enables large-scale production of limbal stem cells with no need for patient tissue biopsy, meaning people who suffer blindness in both eyes have the potential to be cured for the first time.

Founded in 2021 as a spin-out from Tampere University's Eye Regeneration Group, StemSight's new laboratory facilities are located in the same building where Finland's first clinical-grade stem cell lines were originally developed two decades earlier.

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For additional information:

Media kit with pictures

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StemSight develops advanced stem cell therapies to restore vision in patients with severe corneal blindness. Combining cutting-edge science with a patient-focused mission, the company aims to transform treatment options for debilitating ocular conditions. At its core, StemSight leverages Nobel Prize-winning iPS cell technology to manufacture corneal cells in a scalable, cost-effective manner. Unlike traditional donor-dependent solutions, StemSight's readily available, off-the-shelf therapy provides a scalable, consistent, and accessible alternative. By combining these cells with biomaterials, the company offers a targeted, donor-independent solution for vision loss. StemSight's first target indication is Limbal Stem Cell Deficiency (LSCD), a rare but severe condition that leads to corneal blindness. In the future, the company aims to expand its pipeline to address additional ocular diseases, further broadening its impact on vision restoration.