

# Mercia Asset Management

Life sciences helping the COVID-19 fight

Life sciences is one of Mercia's areas of focus and investment expertise. Seven of Mercia's top 20 holdings at 31 March 2020 were in life sciences, valued at £29m in aggregate or 33% of total portfolio value (all of which had originated through Mercia's third-party managed funds), with another c 40 earlier-stage life sciences investments across its third-party managed funds. COVID-19 has accelerated the opportunity for a new generation of novel and recombinant vaccines. This explosion of potential new treatments will require new diagnostics and bio-manufacturing support to scale supply once they are approved. These are areas where Mercia is already invested.

Period end	Net cash* (£m)	Direct investments (£m)	FUM (£m)	NAV (£m)	NAV per share (p)	P/NAV (x)
03/17	59.6	52.0	336.5	121.4	40.4	0.53
03/18	49.4	66.1	400.0	123.5	40.7	0.53
03/19	29.8	87.7	381.0	126.1	41.6	0.51
03/20	30.2	87.5	658.0	141.5	32.1	0.67

Note: \*Includes liquid securities but not funds held on behalf of EIS investors.

## Mercia remains well funded

Mercia ended FY20 with £30m of unrestricted balance sheet cash and short-term liquidity investments included within total liquidity of c £320m across all asset classes. This means it is in a strong position to continue to deploy capital, both through its managed funds as well as in direct investments on its balance sheet.

# Overall beneficial impact from COVID-19

Although Mercia's engineering/materials related investments have experienced the most negative impact from COVID-19, some of these have started to show signs of recovery. However, 80% of Mercia's direct investment portfolio is in sectors that have seen positive benefits from COVID-19, such as life sciences (33% of the direct investment portfolio) and software (49% of the direct investment portfolio), providing a strong underpinning for FY21.

#### Valuation: 0.67x NAV + £20m for MFM

Mercia's shares continue to trade at a discount to NAV (0.67x), even before considering the embedded value of Mercia's fund management operations (MFM), which we estimate could be worth an additional £20m (c 4.5p per share) on top of NAV. Catalysts for a re-rating include further scaling of the business, commercialisation of the direct investment portfolio and/or further successful exits similar to that of The Native Antigen Company announced in July 2020.

Portfolio update

Investment companies

#### 14 October 2020

Price	21.4p
Market cap	£94m
Net cash (£m) at 31 March 2020	30.2
Shares in issue	440.1m
Free float	68.6%
Code	MERC
Primary exchange	AIM
Secondary exchange	N/A

#### Share price performance



## **Business description**

Mercia Asset Management is a regionally focused specialist asset manager. Its stated intent is to become the leading regional provider of supportive balance sheet, venture, private equity and debt capital in transaction sizes typically below £10m.

Next event	
Half-year results	December 2020
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# Mercia's life sciences portfolio

# **COVID-19 presses the accelerator**

For many years, life sciences has been a significant growth sector globally, with new technologies and techniques being applied across numerous specialist fields. The UK is a global leader in life sciences, with new businesses being set-up or spun out of universities across the breadth of the country. COVID-19, and the search for better diagnostics, vaccines and bio-manufacturing, has delivered a boost for the sector, with momentum anticipated to continue even once new vaccines have been found.

Mercia has a 15-year track record in the life sciences sector, which is not surprising given most of the UK's fast-growing life sciences' industry is based in the UK's regions and, as such, life sciences is one of Mercia's three principal sectors.

Mercia and its life sciences portfolio companies have issued a series of announcements in 2020 (including the sale of The Native Antigen Company announced in July 2020):

- In early April, two of Mercia's direct portfolio companies, The Native Antigen Company and Oxford Genetics (OXGENE), announced the formation of a new strategic partnership to scale up COVID-19 antigen production. This was followed in early May by the announcement of a £3m funding round into OXGENE, with Mercia investing a further £1m alongside Canaccord Genuity Wealth Management. OXGENE's technology accelerates the design, discovery and manufacture of new biologics.
- 14 May 2020 Medherant, a transdermal drug delivery company, announced a partnership agreement with Cycle Pharmaceuticals to develop new products using Medherant's proprietary TEPI Patch technology. Under the agreement, Medherant will receive upfront payments for each candidate drug targeted and royalty payments on future product sales.
- 1 July 2020 MIP Diagnostics completed a £5.1m funding round to scale production of its polymer antibodies, with Mercia committing £0.5m alongside the Business Growth Fund, Downing Ventures, Calculus Capital and MIP management.
- 9 July 2020 Mercia announced the sale of The Native Antigen Company for up to £18m in cash, with management expecting to realise £5.2m (1.2p per share) for the group's 29.4% direct investment. The Native Antigen Company was held at £3.5m on the balance sheet at 31 March 2020, with the sale representing a fair value gain of up to £1.9m an 8.4x return on Mercia's initial December 2014 direct investment and an internal rate of return (IRR) of 65%.

Given the significant progress made in FY20, Mercia provided an update on its life sciences portfolio on 18 September 2020 to highlight the unrecognised value in the portfolio.

## Life sciences in the context of the overall portfolio

Life sciences is one of Mercia's areas of focus and investment expertise.

Seven of Mercia's top 20 holdings at 31 March 2020 were in life sciences, valued at £29m in aggregate or 33% of total portfolio value (all of which had originated through Mercia's third-party managed funds) with another c 40 earlier-stage investments across its third-party managed funds. In FY20 to date, £4.2m has been invested into six of Mercia's direct life sciences investments, with a further £1.6m invested in the sector through Mercia's managed funds.

At 31 March 2020, Mercia held £30m of unrestricted cash and short-term liquidity investments within total liquidity of c £320m across all asset classes. This financial firepower means Mercia is in



a strong position to continue to deploy capital through its managed funds as well as directly from its

Although Mercia's engineering/materials related investments have experienced the most negative impact from COVID-19, a number of these have started to show signs of recovery over the past few months. However, over 80% of the portfolio is in sectors that have responded positively to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as life sciences (a third of the direct investment portfolio), software and digital entertainment (49% of the direct investment portfolio), providing a strong underpinning for FY21.

£000s	Net value Net cash		Fair value	Net value	Fair value	Mercia's	Estimated	
	1 April	invested	change	31 March	change	holding at	enterprise	
	2019	FY20	FY20	2020	FY20	31 March 2020	value** at 31 March 2020	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	%	%	£000s	
nDreams	15,120	1,000	-	16,120	-	36.4	44,300	
OXGENE	10,161	-	1,582	11,743	16	30.2	38,900	
Intechnica	6,677	500	-	7,177	-	27.5	26,100	
Medherant	5,205	1,500	-	6,705	-	30.1	22,300	
Voxpopme	3,026	2,000	1,004	6,030	33	17.1	35,300	
Ton UK (Intelligent Positioning)	5,473	400	(1,519)	4,354	(28)	28.2	15,400	
Impression Technologies	5,381	2,000	(3,087)	4,294	(57)	25.9	16,600	
Faradion	3,525	500	-	4,025	-	15.6	25,800	
Warwick Acoustics	7,904	1,065	(5,313)	3,656	(67)	52.9	6,900	
The Native Antigen Company*	2,863	-	630	3,493	22	29.4	11,900	
Soccer Manager	2,099	300	135	2,534	6	34.8	7,300	
Edge Case Games	2,300	-	-	2,300	-	21.2	10,800	
Locate Bio	500	1,750	-	2,250	-	17.4	12,900	
VirtTrade (Avid Games)	3,938	550	(2,288)	2,200	(58)	25.8	8,500	
PsiOxus Therapeutics	2,377	160	(344)	2,193	(15)	1.4	156,600	
sureCore	1,834	333	-	2,167	-	22.0	9,900	
W2 Global Data Solutions	2,000	-	-	2,000	-	15.2	13,200	
Eyoto Group	1,755	875	(878)	1,752	(50)	15.7	11,200	
One Touch Apps (Clear Review)	-	500	-	500	-	3.9	12,800	
Concepta	1,133	750	(1,408)	475	(124)	22.4	2,100	
Other direct investments	4,388	1,473	(4,358)	1,503				
Total	87,659	15,656	(15,844)	87,471				

Source: Mercia. Note: Excludes post year-end investments. \*The sale of The Native Antigen Company was announced at the start of July 2020 for up to £18m in cash, a c 50% uplift on fair value. \*\*Enterprise values are estimated from fully diluted shareholding percentages.

# Update on life sciences portfolio

We have provided a summary of Mercia's seven direct investments in Exhibit 3, but Mercia's full announcement, including commentary on the managed fund investments in the sector can be found <a href="https://example.com/here">here</a>.

We have also recorded an Edison TV interview, where Dr Mark Payton (CEO with responsibility for OXGENE, Medherant and MIPs), Peter Dines (COO and previous head of life sciences with responsibility for Sense Bio, Locate Bio, The Native Antigen Company and Axis) and Dr Mark Wyatt (investment director with responsibility for Abingdon Health) discuss Mercia's approach to investment in the life sciences sector, the impact of COVID-19 and what this might mean for Mercia's future investment strategy in life sciences.



Exhibit 2: Management interview video - Mercia's approach to life sciences







Source: Edison Investment Research

# Mercia's approach to investment in life sciences

Mercia's investment track record in the life sciences sector stretches back over 15 years. Today, Mercia manages a portfolio of over 400 businesses through its venture capital, private equity and debt managed funds, of which c 10% by number are in the life sciences sector. Together with its focus on the regions and wide network of offices (eight locations around the country), Mercia has privileged, early access to deal flow from the regions. This provides a filtered pipeline of future direct investments at the parent level. It is notable that all seven life science investments in Mercia's top 20 holdings originated through its managed funds.

It is also worth making the point that life sciences is a very broad investment category. Within the Mercia senior management team, Dr Mark Payton, Peter Dines and Dr Mark Wyatt, all have industry expertise in the sector as well as a long-term investment track record. However, given the breadth of the sector, the team benefits from Mercia's collective network of contacts to validate and undertake diligence on potential investment opportunities in specific fields. Mercia has built relationships with 19 university partners to support the business. With over 40 life sciences companies in the group, Mercia also has access to a network of non-executive directors, each a source of potential deal flow and sector contacts.

Given its financial resources, Mercia targets businesses with relatively modest capital needs, typically up to c £20m in total across multiple rounds. Given that leading biotechs often raise hundreds of millions of dollars of pure risk capital, this constrained access to capital means Mercia tends to look for opportunities in relatively unloved sectors such as diagnostics, medtech (although recent valuations have been picking up) and improvements in bio-manufacturing production.

# COVID-19 has accelerated investment in life sciences

COVID-19 has also had a major impact. As has happened with the acceleration of the transition to a digital economy, COVID-19 has also significantly accelerated vaccine development, with five years of normal development time being compressed into just months. In the last 20 years, no more than a handful of new vaccines have been approved for use on the public. However, in response to COVID-19, c 40 new vaccines are under clinical development, with six in Phase III trials, of which five are based on novel recombinant technologies. Another 100+ are in pre-clinical trials.



For Mercia, COVID-19 has accelerated the opportunity for a new generation of novel and recombinant vaccines. There is unlikely to be a single vaccine, with multiple vaccines a more probable outcome to be used amongst different groups by governments around the world. This explosion of potential new treatments will all require new diagnostics to measure their efficacy, as well as bio-manufacturing support to scale supply once they are approved. These are areas where Mercia has invested.

Exhibit 3: Mercia's direct investments in li	fe sciences				
OXGENE					
Stage: Series B	Bio-manufacturing – gene therapy, gene editing and antibody discovery				
Valuation: £38.9m	Direct stake: 30.2% fully diluted				
Mercia direct funding as at 31/3/20: £5.1m	Managed funds: c 10% fully diluted stake				
Strategic partnership with Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies	100%+ annual revenue growth (FY18–20)				
Co-investors: Canaccord Genuity Wealth Management	Indirect spin-out from Oxford University				
Medherant					
Stage: Series A	Medtech – transdermal drug-in-adhesive patches				
Valuation: £19.2m	Direct stake: 30.1% fully diluted				
Mercia direct funding as at 31/3/20: £5.2m	Managed funds: c 16% fully diluted stake				
Co-investors: Cycle Pharma, Innovate UK	University of Warwick				
In June 2020, the company completed a £2.8m syndicated round, with Mercia investing £1.4m	In May 2020, Medherant announced a strategic partnership with Cyc Pharma to commercialise the TEPI Patch® technology				
Locate Bio					
Stage: Seed	Orthobiologics – therapies include bone protein to overcome lower back pain and biological renewal of the intervertebral disc				
Valuation: £12.9m	Direct stake: 17.4% fully diluted				
Mercia direct funding as at 31/3/20: £2.3m	Managed funds: c 17% fully diluted stake				
New CEO appointed (ex ApaTech)	University of Nottingham				
Co-investors: Wellcome Trust, Heraeus Medical, Future Fund	In July 2020, Locate secured a syndicated investment of £2.5m of which Mercia made a direct investment of £0.8m.				
MIP Diagnostics					
Stage: Series A	Diagnostics – development and manufacture of synthetic affinity reagents, polymers designed to bind to specific target molecules for detection, purification or extraction				
Valuation: £12.9m	Direct stake: 3.3% fully diluted				
Mercia direct funding as at 31/3/20: £0.3m	Managed funds: c 30% fully diluted stake				
Co-investors: Downing, Calculus, BGF	University of Leicester				
£5.1m syndicated funding round in July 2020 to accelerate global expansion	Partnership with Stream Bio to develop a rapid COVID-19 viral infection detection assay				
The Native Antigen Company					
Stage: Exited	Diagnostics – leading producer of infectious disease reagents that include antigens for COVID-19 antibody test kits				
Valuation: £18.0m (50% premium to book value)	Direct stake: 29.4% fully diluted				
Mercia direct funding as at 31/3/20: £0.1m	Managed funds: c 30% fully diluted stake				
Co-investors: Angel investors	University of Birmingham				
Sold to global life sciences tools company LGC in July 2020	The exit generated an 8.4x return and a 65% IRR on Mercia's original direct investment and a 12.1x return, a 31% fund IRR, on Mercia's blended managed fund investments				
Source: Edison Investment Research, Crunchbase	, Mercia Asset Management				



		015	2016	2017	2018	2019	20
ear end 31 March	<u>IF</u>	RS	IFRS	IFRS	IFRS	IFRS	IFF
NCOME STATEMENT Revenue		508	4 755	0.000	40.407	10.675	40.7
cost of Sales		(10)	1,755 (79)	6,660 (92)	10,197 0	0 10,075	12,7
Gross Profit		498	1,676	6,568	10,197	10,675	12,7
Operating costs	(1,4		(4,011)	(9,051)	(10,633)	(12,115)	(12,6
air value changes		934	896	4,268	2,823	3,916	(15,8
Realised gains	0,	0	0	839	871	0,510	(10,0
lormalised operating profit	2.9	937	(1,439)	2,624	3,258	2,476	(15,7
Amortisation of acquired intangibles	_,,	0	(17)	(301)	(301)	(301)	(8
exceptionals	(1,0		(372)	(1,125)	(1,125)	0	(6
Share-based payments		(44)	(230)	(395)	(497)	(171)	(5
Reported operating profit		875	(2,058)	803	1,335	2,004	(17,8
let Interest	,	93	361	186	274	562	, ,-
oint ventures & associates (post tax)		0	0	0	0	0	
Profit Before Tax (norm)	3,0	030	(1,078)	2,810	3,532	3,038	(15,5
Profit Before Tax (reported)	1,9	968	(1,697)	989	1,609	2,566	(17,6
Reported tax		0	0	54	54	54	
Profit After Tax (norm)	3,0	030	(1,078)	2,810	3,532	3,038	(15,5
Profit After Tax (reported)	1,9	968	(1,697)	1,043	1,663	2,620	(17,4
Minority interests		0	0	0	0	0	
Discontinued operations		0	0	0	0	0	
let income (normalised)	3,0	030	(1,078)	2,810	3,532	3,038	(15,5
Net income (reported)	1,9	968	(1,697)	1,043	1,663	2,620	(17,4
Basic average number of shares outstanding (m)		212	212	224	302	303	,
EPS – basic normalised (p)		1.43	(0.51)	1.26	1.17	1.00	(4
EPS – diluted normalised (p)		1.43	(0.51)	1.20	1.17	1.00	(4
EPS – basic reported (p)		).93	(0.80)	0.47	0.55	0.86	(5
Dividend (p)		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(3
Revenue growth (%)		9.7)	245.5	279.5	53.1	4.7	1
Gross Margin (%)		98.0	95.5	98.6	100.0	100.0	10
Normalised Operating Margin		78.1	-82.0	39.4	32.0	23.2	-12
BALANCE SHEET		0.1	02.0	00.4	02.0	20.2	12
ixed Assets	27,	121	50,103	63,693	77,428	98,724	124,8
ntangible Assets		455	11,815	11,514	11,213	10,912	36.7
angible Assets	Σ,	49	145	151	145	153	
Right of use assets		0	0	0	0	0	
nvestments & other	24,0		38,143	52,028	66,070	87,659	87.4
Current Assets	54,3		31,730	64,576	53,965	31,180	31,9
Stocks	01,	0	0 1,700	0 1,070	0	0	01,
Debtors	•	716	798	747	1,057	782	1,3
Cash & cash equivalents	23,0		20.932	28,829	42,908	25,210	24,4
Short term liquidity investments	30,0		10,000	35,000	10,000	5,188	6,2
Current Liabilities		331)	(1,521)	(6,698)	(7,760)	(3,730)	(6,6
Creditors		31)	(1,521)	(6,698)	(7,760)	(3,730)	(4,8
ax and social security	(-	Ó	Ó	0	0	0	
ease liabilities		0	0	0	0	0	(1
Short term borrowings		0	0	0	0	0	
Other (incl deferred consideration)		0	0	0	0	0	(1,7
ong Term Liabilities		0	(271)	(217)	(163)	(109)	(8,7
ong term borrowings		0	Ó	Ó	0	0	(-,
ease liabilities		0	0	0	0	0	(4
Other long term liabilities		0	(271)	(217)	(163)	(109)	(8,2
Net Assets	80,8		80,041	121,354	123,470	126,065	141,
Minority interests	,	0	0	0	0	0	
Shareholders' equity	80,8	839	80,041	121,354	123,470	126,065	141,
NAV per share (p)		3.13	37.46	40.37	40.71	41.56	32
CASH FLOW	*						
Dp Cash Flow before WC and tax	2 (	943	(1,406)	2,700	3,339	2,560	(15,6
Vorking capital		(20)	650	5,250	(87)	(3,724)	(13,0
Exceptional & other	(4,9		(1,268)	(5,107)	(3,694)	(3,916)	15,
Depreciation of right-of-use assets	(4,5	0	(1,200)	0	(3,034)	(5,510)	
ax		0	0	0	0	0	
let operating cash flow	(2,0	-	(2,024)	2,843	(442)	(5,080)	
Capex		(27)	(113)	(82)	(75)	(92)	
Acquisitions/disposals	(11,5		(20,939)	(8,779)	(10,664)	(17,673)	(28,0
Vet interest	(11,0	22	397	165	260	531	(20,0
equity financing	67,		(22)	38,750	0	(196)	30,
inidends	01,	0	(22)	30,730	0	(196)	30,
Dither	(30,0		20,000	(25,000)	25,000	4,812	(3,0
oner Net Cash Flow	23,0		(2,701)	7,897	14,079	(17,698)	
							(7
Opening net debt/(cash)		(39) 0	(23,633)	(20,932)	(28,829)	(42,908)	(25,2
Other non-cash movements		(39)	0	0	0	0	
		`					(04.4
Closing net debt/(cash)	(23,6	1001	(20,932)	(28,829)	(42,908)	(25,210)	(24,4



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