CLAIMS:

1. A purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% identity to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 47-115 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T,

wherein the polypeptide binds to at least one ligand polypeptide selected from human VEGF-C, VEGF-D, and PlGF.

2. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 1, comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% identity to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 47-210 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T.

3. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 1, comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% identity to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 47-314 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T.

4. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 1, comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% identity to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 25-314 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T.

5. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4 that retains four N-glycosylation sequon sites corresponding to positions 33-35 of SEQ ID NO: 2, positions 166-168 of SEQ ID NO: 2, positions 251-253 of SEQ ID NO: 2, and positions 299-301 of SEQ ID NO: 2.

6. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 5, that is glycosylated at said four N-glycosylation sequon sites.

7. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 1, comprising an amino acid sequence that is identical to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 47-115 of SEQ ID NO: 2, positions 47-210 of SEQ ID NO: 2 , positions 47-314 of SEQ ID NO: 2, or positions 47-752 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T.

8. A purified or isolated, ligand binding polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% identity to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 25-314 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T,

wherein the polypeptide lacks VEGFR-3 Ig-like domains 4-7, lacks a VEGFR-3 transmembrane domain, and lacks a VEGFR-3 intracellular domain, and

wherein the polypeptide binds human VEGF-C or human VEGF-D.

9. A purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% identity to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 25-314 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T,

wherein the polypeptide binds human VEGF-C or human VEGF-D and inhibits VEGF-C- or VEGF-D-binding to VEGFR-3 or inhibits VEGF-C- or VEGF-D-mediated stimulation of VEGFR-3 in a cell expressing VEGFR-3 on its surface.

10. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4 that binds human VEGF-C with a K_d or 1 nM or less.

11. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4, that binds human VEGF-D with a K_d of 5 nM or less.

12. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4, wherein the amino acid in the polypeptide corresponding to position 104 of SEQ ID NO: 2 is deleted or replaced with another amino acid.

13. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4, wherein the amino acid corresponding to position 104 of SEQ ID NO: 2 is deleted or replaced with another amino acid selected from the group consisting of glutamine, aspartate, glutamate, arginine, and lysine.

14. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand polypeptide according to claim 1, wherein the polypeptide comprises amino acids 23-290 of SEQ ID NO: 3.

15. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4, further comprising a signal peptide.

16. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4, further comprising at least one polyethylene glycol moiety attached to the polypeptide.

17. The purified or isolated ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 16, comprising polyethylene glycol of about 20 – 40 kDa attached to the amino terminus of the polypeptide.

18. A soluble, ligand binding molecule comprising the soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4 connected to a heterologous peptide.

19. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claim 18, wherein the heterologous peptide comprises an immunoglobulin constant domain fragment.

20. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claim 19, wherein the immunoglobulin constant domain fragment is an IgG constant domain fragment.

21. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claim 19, wherein the immunoglobulin constant fragment comprises amino acids 306-537 of SEQ ID NO: 3.

22. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claim 18, optionally comprising a linker connecting the heterologous peptide to the soluble, ligand binding polypeptide.

23. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claims 18 that comprises a polypeptide in which a C-terminal amino acid of the soluble, ligand binding polypeptide is directly attached to an N-terminal amino acid of the heterologous peptide by a peptide bond.

24. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claim 18, further comprising a signal peptide that directs secretion of the molecule from a cell that expresses the molecule.

25. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claim 18, wherein the molecule comprises the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 3.

26. The soluble, ligand binding molecule according to claim 18, wherein the ligand binding polypeptide and the heterologous peptide are linked by amide bonding to form a single polypeptide chain.

27. The soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4 or the ligand binding molecule according to claim 18 further comprising a detectable label.

28. A conjugate comprising the soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 4 or the ligand binding molecule according to claim 18 and a chemotherapeutic agent.

29. A composition comprising a purified or isolate, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide or ligand binding molecule according to claim 4 and a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent, adjuvant, excipient, or carrier.

30. The composition according to claim 29, that is formulated for topical administration.

31. The composition according to claim 30, that is in the form of a solid, a paste, an ointment, a gel, a liquid, an aerosol, a mist, a polymer, a film, an emulsion, or a suspension.

32. The composition according to claim 29, that is formulated for intravitreal administration.

33. The purified or isolated, soluble, ligand binding polypeptide according to claim 1, comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% identity to the sequence of amino acids defined by positions 25-752 of SEQ ID NO: 2, with the proviso that positions of the polypeptide corresponding to positions 104-106 of SEQ ID NO: 2 are not identical to N-X-S or N-X-T.