



VISUALSONICS

For Immediate Release



VisualSonics and Bracco Sign Exclusive Partnership to Provide MicroMarker™ Molecular Imaging Kits

*Manufacturing and Technology Collaboration Will Leverage
Annual \$500 Million Market*

Toronto, Canada / Geneva, Switzerland - June 7, 2006 - VisualSonics (Toronto), the world's leading developer of high-resolution, ultrasound-based, *in vivo* micro-imaging systems, and Bracco Group, the foremost developer and manufacturer of ultrasound-based contrast agents, today announced an exclusive agreement for the joint development and manufacture of MicroMarker™ contrast agents optimized for pre-clinical molecular imaging on VisualSonics' Vevo 770® micro-ultrasound platform.

Under the exclusive arrangement, Bracco will develop and manufacture a complete range of contrast agent kits for VisualSonics' rapidly growing customer base using the Vevo 770™ micro-ultrasound platform specifically designed for the preclinical research market. Bracco will manufacture the agents based on its proprietary technology at Bracco Research SA of Geneva. The two companies will collaborate to develop a complete range of kits and protocols for a variety of biomarkers and research applications including cancer, cardio and vascular applications.

"With the addition of contrast-enhanced molecular imaging capabilities to its micro-ultrasound technology, VisualSonics/Bracco offer the only platform with high spatial and temporal resolution that simultaneously provides anatomical, functional and molecular data," comments Dr. Michel Schneider, Director of Bracco Research SA. He continues, "We are thrilled to help leverage micro-ultrasound's capabilities by providing the highest quality-controlled kits and protocols optimized for a variety of imaging applications."

VisualSonics' CEO Tom Little states, "By providing high-quality application-specific MicroMarker™ "kits" VisualSonics and Bracco are in an ideal position to penetrate the \$500 million incremental annual market potential in preclinical contrast agent revenues. Little adds, "By partnering with Bracco, we are able to leverage their world-class expertise in manufacturing contrast agents kits and quickly provide a variety of application-specific kits and protocols optimized for our customers' specific research and drug discovery and development needs."

The VisualSonics/Bracco agreement will further the utility of micro-imaging for quantifying biomarkers, validating therapeutic efficacy of drug candidates and providing a platform for transferring research from the preclinical realm to the clinic. The announcement represents the latest development in a series of significant advances in the molecular imaging industry including the launch of its cancer-related molecular application at AACR (American Association of Cancer Research) in April 2006 and the announcement of Dr. Jonathan Lindner as their Chief Molecular Advisor.

An online video announcement of the partnership is available at www.visualsonics.com.

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About VisualSonics

VisualSonics is the world's leading developer of high-resolution, ultrasound-based, *in vivo* micro-imaging systems designed specifically for non-invasive preclinical research. The company's enabling micro-ultrasound technology, the Vevo 770, allows researchers at the world's most prestigious pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, hospitals and research centers to conduct genetic research, phenotypic study and drug development.

Micro-ultrasound is the fastest growing preclinical imaging modality. This enabling technology is facilitating research in cardiac and vascular disease, cancer, stem cell research and developmental biology. When compared to other imaging options, only micro-ultrasound has the combination of high-resolution, real-time imaging, *in vivo* detection and analysis, reasonable cost, ease-of-use, portability and no negative biological effects. More information on VisualSonics can be found at www.visualsonics.com.

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About Bracco

The Bracco Group is a leader in the diagnostic imaging market, with net sales of about 800 million Euro. Bracco has operations in 115 countries and about 2,200 employees, around 400 of whom work in R&D. Bracco invests approximately 15% of its annual turnover in R&D and has a portfolio of about 3,000 granted and pending patents worldwide. The Bracco Group provides the diagnostic imaging market with an integrated product offering from a diverse roster of subsidiary companies. While Bracco is recognized internationally as a market leader in its core business of contrast media, Bracco also markets key diagnostic imaging resources through the following companies: ACIST Medical Systems, a manufacturer of advanced contrast media injection systems, located in Minneapolis and Singapore-based Volume Interactions, which also produces 3-D advanced medical software.

Bracco also operates a high-level international research network, with three centers (Milan, Geneva, and Princeton). These centers develop products of the latest-generation diagnostic techniques, from X-ray and computed tomography (CT) to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), nuclear medicine (NM) and contrast-enhanced ultrasound (CEUS).

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