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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bracco Imaging reinforces its commitment to innovation in ultrasound for the development of a new personalized gene therapy

Milan, Italy, January 23, 2018 - Bracco Imaging S.p.A., a global leader in diagnostic imaging, announced today that it has initiated new experimental activities in its R&D Center in Geneva, Switzerland, to explore a new application for gas-filled microbubbles in the development of personalized gene therapy for treatment of chronic dysfunctional diseases related to lipid metabolism.

Microbubbles have already revolutionized medical imaging in the field of Contrast Enhanced Ultrasound (CEUS) - a high-sensitivity, non-invasive, real-time, cost-effective and radiation-free modality that improves the visualization and assessment of cardiac cavities, large vessels and tissue vascularity. As an established and robust tool for diagnostic imaging, microbubbles are now also considered a platform for therapeutic drug or gene delivery.

“Today’s kick-off of new research activities provides an additional opportunity to exploit the microbubble platform and create an innovative therapeutic approach to addressing unmet medical needs,” said Thierry Bettinger, PhD, Research Department Director at Bracco Suisse SA. “We consider the personalized gene therapy under evaluation as an opportunity to expand the use of the microbubble platform. We are looking for a large number of biomedical applications, and are confident that our technology can be used to address a wide range of healthcare challenges.”

This research project is the result of an agreement that Bracco has recently signed with SonoGene LCC, an innovative start-up company focused on the development of novel platforms for therapeutic delivery of genes and pharmaceuticals using ultrasound-triggered, non-viral microbubble delivery systems. Furthermore, the research project envisages a very close cooperation with Steven Feinstein, MD - Professor of Medicine at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., and Co-President of the International Contrast Ultrasound Society (ICUS) - who is considered one of the most influential experts in CEUS.

“SonoGene’s early animal studies successfully showed that tiny microbubbles can deliver genes to a targeted organ system and produce a desired therapeutic effect,” Dr. Feinstein said. He explained that the initial studies used microbubbles to transport genes to the liver in order to stimulate the body’s production of natural, *de novo* HDL cholesterol - the “good cholesterol” that may protect against certain cardiovascular diseases. “SonoGene’s gene therapy can ultimately harness the body’s own biological mechanisms to provide a natural form of therapy,” he added.

Dr. Feinstein also believes that the microbubbles will provide a broad and flexible platform for safely delivering other genes and pharmaceutical compounds, including cancer drugs, to targeted organ systems or tumors throughout the body. In addition, he noted that microbubble-based delivery vehicles do not use viral carriers, synthetic or recombinant proteins.

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“Our investments to exploit innovative approaches of the microbubble platform reinforce our commitment and leadership in ultrasound, while fostering future applications of this technique beyond diagnostic imaging,” said Micol Fornaroli, Chief Strategy Officer at Bracco Imaging.

“SonoGene is excited to collaborate with Bracco Imaging and leverage our unique and extensive expertise in the development of microbubble-based gene and drug delivery systems to save lives and improve patient care,” said Dr. Eric Coles, Chief Executive Officer at SonoGene.

About Bracco Imaging

Bracco Imaging S.p.A., part of the Bracco Group, is one of the world’s leading companies in the diagnostic imaging business. Headquartered in Milan, Italy, Bracco Imaging develops, manufactures and markets diagnostic imaging agents and solutions that meet medical needs.

Bracco Imaging offers a product and solution portfolio for all key diagnostic imaging modalities: X-ray Imaging (including Computed Tomography-CT, Interventional Radiology, and Cardiac Catheterization), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Contrast Enhanced Ultrasound (CEUS), Nuclear Medicine through radioactive tracers. The diagnostic imaging offer is completed by several medical devices and advanced administration systems for contrast imaging products in the fields of radiology.

The Company operates in more than 100 markets worldwide, either directly or indirectly, through subsidiaries, joint ventures, licenses and distribution partnership agreements. With an on-going research covering all key modalities, Bracco Imaging has a strong presence in key geographies: North America, Europe and Japan operating through the Joint Venture Bracco-Eisai Co. Ltd. The Company also operates in Brazil, South Korea, and China through the Joint Venture Bracco Sine Pharmaceutical Corp. Ltd.

Operational investments have been made in order to achieve top quality and compliances with a sustainable eco-friendly production. Manufacturing activities are located in Italy, Switzerland, Japan, China, and Germany.

Bracco Imaging is an innovative Research and Development (R&D) player with an efficient process oriented approach and a track record of innovation in the diagnostic imaging industry. R&D activities are managed in the three Research Centres located in Italy, Switzerland, and the USA.

To learn more about Bracco Imaging, visit www.braccoimaging.com.

About SonoGene

SonoGene is a privately held company with advanced expertise and worldwide patents in the field of non-viral, microbubble-based delivery systems for genes and pharmaceutical compounds. The Company’s headquarters are in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, U.S.

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