Optisense Receives innoWATOR government grant for developing an Early Warning system for *E. coli* in drinking water

Enschede – January 9, 2008 – Optisense, the leading provider of state-of the-art optical biosensor technology and Vitens, the largest Dutch Drinking water company, have received an innoWATOR grant from the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs for developing an Early Warning system for *E. coli* and other indicators for fecal pathogens in drinking water. The Advice committee of government agency Senter*Novem* has ranked the Optisense proposal first under the total of 19 applications. The core of the system will be an *E. coli* sensor with a disposable sensor surface in combination with a concentrator unit. By taking frequent drinking water samples on strategic positions the system will report drinking water companies automatically on the outcome of the analysis and operate as an Early Warning system. As a result the drinking water will be monitored continueously".

Through the innoWATOR facility the Ministry of Economic Affairs supports disruptive innovations in water technology with a high export potential. According to the Advice committee of Senter*Novem* the systems technological innovation, the sustainable economic outlook and the close cooperation with Vitens is very good.

The presence of *E.coli* in drinking water is a very powerful indication of the presence of fecal pathogens and therefore of a risk to public health. Drinking water companies all over the world are therefore testing drinking water on *E. coli* very frequently. Currently analyses of samples are carried out in laboratories which is time consuming (48-96 hours) and costly. At the time a contamination in water is determined the drinking water has already been distributed and consumed by the public.

Jos-Willem Verhoef, COO at Optisense, said: "we are very pleased by the decision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs to support the development of our Early Warning System. Our ultra sensitive sensing system allows for an early detection of *E.coli* incidents. This decreases significantly the chance of consuming polluted water. Especially for water distribution systems in fast growing economies this is a break through. This grant, our close cooperation with Vitens and our subsidiary Optiqua, gives us an excellent opportunity to develop an innovative Dutch water technology export product".

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Optisense is a leading provider of state-of-the-art biosensor technology. Based on a unique combination of an optic chip, a biochemical layer, micro-fluidics and electronics, the patented technology guarantees high-end laboratory sensitivity while enabling real time and on-site detection of contaminants and biochemical substances. The 'Lab-on-Chip' sensor can be tailored for the detection of any specific (bio) chemical substance. Optisense has initiated several projects with strategic partners in areas of water quality monitoring, detection of contaminants in commodities, detection of biochemical war fare agents, monitoring of Greenhouse gas levels and detection of bacteria and viruses. A subsidiary of Optisense is the Singapore based water technology company Optiqua (www.optiqua.com).