

# News Release

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## **Willis M&A Practice Voted Specialist Adviser of the Year**

**London, UK, May 16, 2006** – The Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) practice of Willis Group Holdings (NYSE:WSH), the global insurance broker, was voted Specialist Adviser of the Year at the Real Deals/British Venture Capital Association (BVCA) Private Equity Awards.

The Private Equity Awards recognise the very best achievements of individuals and firms in the venture capital and private equity industry. The annual awards are the ultimate accolade for the industry's dealmakers, advisers and bankers in the UK.

The judging panel voted Willis M&A as the Specialist Adviser of the Year after reviewing evidence that the Willis practice showed the best quality and growth, added the most value to private equity houses, and demonstrated genuine innovation, creativity of approach and professionalism.

The Specialist Adviser category, which was added to the awards this year, is open to specialist advisory firms across all disciplines that serve the private equity industry, including services such as placement agents, debt advisory, due diligence and insurance. The award is based upon the adviser's overall achievements in 2005.

After scrutinising over a dozen entries in the Specialist Adviser category, an independent research team from the London Business School Private Equity Institute shortlisted the three best candidates and then conducted intensive interviews with each of them. The team's findings were then presented to a panel of 12 distinguished expert judges.

**Alistair Lester, leader of Willis' International M&A Practice**, said "We are delighted to have won this prestigious award. The fact that this award category was open to the full spectrum of the advisory community, from banks and accounting firms through to environmental specialists, makes it a truly great achievement for Willis."

Willis Group Holdings Limited is a leading global insurance broker, developing and delivering professional insurance, reinsurance, risk management, financial and

human resource consulting and actuarial services to corporations, public entities and institutions around the world. With over 300 offices in more than 80 countries, its global team of 15,400 associates serves clients in some 190 countries. Willis is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol WSH. Additional information on Willis may be found on its web site: [www.willis.com](http://www.willis.com).

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