
Right of reply email: report on BGI Group in the UK

12 messages

Sam Dunning <director@ukctransparency.org>
To: media@genomics.cn

3 May 2024 at 11:17

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sam Dunning and I am the director of UK-China Transparency. We are a UK research organisation. We are planning on publishing a report authored by two journalists about BGI Group's work in the UK and cooperation with British universities. The report is attached.

Please read and provide a response, if you wish, by Tuesday 7th May at 5pm.

Thank you.

Sam

 **[PUBLICATION VERSION] BGI Genomics universities research.docx**
228K

media <media@genomics.cn>
To: Sam Dunning <director@ukctransparency.org>

7 May 2024 at 08:38

Dear Mr. Dunning,

This report recycles a number of allegations that BGI Group has previously refuted and includes assertions that are based on supposition, not fact or evidence. We regret that false accusations continue to be spread, and we welcome the opportunity to respond with facts as follows:

- BGI Group is a privately-owned life sciences organization that has made vital contributions to world health research and development. BGI Group's scientific advances have given mankind greater insights into diseases and led to medical breakthroughs, from the battle against COVID-19 to the fight against cancer and have helped mankind better understand our environment and biodiversity. BGI Group is pleased to provide services and technologies to research institutes in the UK and globally to help advance life sciences and disease discovery, in scientific research partnerships that do not involve identifiable personal information. These services are similar to those provided by other global companies.
- BGI Group take data protection extremely seriously and follow all local laws and data regulations. BGI Genomics Co., Ltd. is a subsidiary of BGI Group. BGI Genomics' laboratories globally achieve a number of international standards, including full compliance with the requirements of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, being accredited the internationally recognized ISO/IEC 27001 standard on information security, and the UK's BS10012 standard regarding personal information management. All of these standards require regular assessment and renewal which we have achieved.
- BGI Genomics follows industry best practices such as purpose limitation, storage limitation, and confidentiality. Samples are used for purposes explicitly stated and agreed upon by data subjects. Pre-natal NIFTY test samples and data collected from Europe are analyzed, stored, and destroyed in accordance with local regulations, including General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- BGI Group does not undertake digital hacking. In Hansard, Minister George Freeman has corrected his Parliamentary statement by saying that "There is no evidence of attempted hacking of Genomics England in 2014 from BGI." [This, should have been made clear in the introduction to the report, not left until two-thirds of the way through the narrative.](#)
- MGI Tech Co., Ltd. is not part of, or controlled by, BGI Group. It is an independent company listed on China's stock exchange in Shanghai. BGI Genomics Co., Ltd. is a subsidiary of BGI Group and is publicly listed in Shenzhen. All ownership information is available in public filings.
- BGI Group did not assist in establishing a DNA database in Xinjiang with Xinjiang Public Security. BGI Group does not engage in unethical practices and does not provide technology for the surveillance of minorities. BGI Group does not condone and would never be involved in any human-rights abuses.
- BGI Group's work is not undertaken for military purposes and its tests are not developed in collaboration with the military. In China, many hospitals affiliated with the military are healthcare providers open to civilian patients, and they are among thousands of healthcare providers that we collaborate with globally. Where BGI Group has undertaken joint research with doctors and researchers from these hospitals, it is for civilian and scientific purposes, and its results are openly published in global scientific journals.

BGI Group is proud to have worked alongside UK scientists since our inception, when we worked together on the Human Genome Project starting from 1999, and then on many projects over the years including the International Chicken Polymorphism Map Consortium.

UK universities are widely recognized as global leaders in life sciences, pioneering cutting-edge research to meet some of the biggest healthcare challenges of the day. BGI Group believes that mankind benefits the most when there is scientific collaboration and open publication of scientific research. We will continue to advocate for open and inclusive global scientific collaboration with the aim of fighting diseases more effectively and improving people's health.

Yours sincerely,

BGI Group

收件人: media <media@genomics.cn>

主题: Right of reply email: report on BGI Group in the UK

外部邮件/External Mail

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Sam Dunning <director@ukctransparency.org>
To: media <media@genomics.cn>

7 May 2024 at 10:31

Hi there,

Thank you. This is helpful. Regarding Xinjiang, we have inserted the following note into the report. Do please respond further by the end of the day if possible.

BGI Group stated that “BGI Group did not assist in establishing a DNA database in Xinjiang with Xinjiang Public Security. BGI Group does not engage in unethical practices and does not provide technology for the surveillance of minorities. BGI Group does not condone and would never be involved in any human-rights abuses.”

As no source for the claim about BGI’s involvement in Xinjiang was included in the original report, and because this is an important point of contention, UKCT has investigated it. There is indeed publicly available [evidence](#) that BGI Group works in Xinjiang and that this work relates to the public security apparatus. One of the strongest pieces of evidence is an account of a signing ceremony published in 2016 by a branch of the government of Xinjiang. According to this account, the ceremony marked the signing of a deal whereby BGI Group would establish a major presence in Xinjiang and work with the government on health, medicine and agriculture but also, critically, on building a “Xinjiang gene bank” (“新疆基因库”) and on “innovative technology for the justice system” (“司法创新技术”). Present were Wang Jian 汪建, who is BGI’s chairman, but also senior officials from Xinjiang and from the China National GeneBank. The account of the ceremony has since been removed from the Internet by the Xinjiang government, however, an [archived version](#) of it has been saved in the Internet Archive.

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media <media@genomics.cn>
To: Sam Dunning <director@ukctransparency.org>

7 May 2024 at 15:24

Dear Mr. Dunning,

Thank you for your further inquiries.

BGI Group would like to clarify that the signing ceremony was for a strategic agreement framework, which did not stipulate any concrete projects. The projects on “innovative technology for the justice system” and the “Xinjiang gene bank” do not exist, as they never commenced in the first place.

Yours sincerely,

BGI Group

发件人: Sam Dunning <director@ukctransparency.org>

日期: 星期二, 2024年5月7日 17:31

收件人: media <media@genomics.cn>

主题: Re: Right of reply email: report on BGI Group in the UK

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