The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

‘Create a New Society’: Russian Lawmakers Order Gene-Editing Tech

September 02, 2019



Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russian lawmakers have ordered a study on assisted human reproduction, including a cutting-edge and controversial gene-editing technology that would create a “new type of society.”

New gene-editing tools such as CRISPR/Cas9 have made it possible to rearrange the genetic code much more precisely and at lower costs than before. A Chinese scientist caused outrage last year with a claim to have “gene-edited” babies, while a Russian biologist has this year declared plans to modify the genomes of human embryos and implant them in women.

Related article: Russian Military Seeks Upper Hand With ‘Genetic Passport’ for Soldiers, Top Scientist Says

The State Duma’s central office placed an 8.97 million ruble ($134,500) contract on the Russian government’s procurement website Friday which seeks expert analysis on the

“nuances” of assisted reproduction by Nov. 30.

“Study the possibilities of conflict-free development of a new generation of technologies for the use of assisted reproductive technologies (genome editing, metabolism management during pregnancy, etc.) to create a new ... type of society,” reads a section of the order.

The contract’s winner will be required to develop the concept of assisted reproductive technology “as a breakthrough of the new century and the basis for the formation of new ideas about professional activity in the current millennium.”

World Health Organization experts said this year that a central registry of all human genome-editing research was needed “in order to create an open and transparent database of ongoing work.”

This spring, Russia launched a 111 billion ruble (US$1.6 billion) federal program to create 10 new varieties of gene-edited crops and animals by 2020 — and an additional 20 by 2027.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/09/02/create-a-new-society-russian-lawmakers-order-gene-editing-tech-a67109