

Russia Seeks Funding for Putin's 'Genetic Database'

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Prime Minister Mishustin has ordered to allocate money toward the National Genetic Information Database by July 30. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

The Russian government is seeking to allocate money toward President Vladimir Putin's national genetic database program, according to recent [instructions](#) from Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin.

Putin, who has sought to transform Russia into a world leader in genetic technologies, [ordered](#) in 2020 the creation of a "National Genetic Information Database."

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Mishustin signed a series of orders Saturday after visiting last month the secretive Kurchatov Institute research organization, which is headed by Putin ally Mikhail Kovalchuk and is leading Russia's genetic research program.

“Mishustin instructed the Education Ministry and Finance Ministry, with the Kurchatov Institute’s participation, to determine the needed funds and sources [for the genetic database] by July 30,” the government said on its website.

Mishustin also expects establishment concept results for the national genetic database by the same deadline.

The independent Meduza news website [reported](#) in April that a “biorepository prototype” should be ready with assistance from Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) by 2024.

Putin, who allocated \$1.7 billion toward genetic research in 2018, ordered “genetic passports” assigned to all Russians by 2025 under the national chemical and biological security strategy. Meduza reported that total spending on the program and its affiliated genetics projects could reach nearly \$3 billion.

Scientists speculated that “genetic passports” could refer to either genetic markers to identify individuals or a detailed list of individual traits and health risks.

The president previously [expressed](#) concern that foreigners are allegedly collecting biomaterials across Russia. His 2017 remarks, which followed a U.S. Air Force request for Russians’ RNA samples and unfounded claims of “biological warfare facilities” in neighboring countries, sparked speculation of “[biological warfare](#)” waged against Russia.

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