

Press release

Largest exhumation project of all times

Hamburger laboratory supports large-scale identification of Vietnam War victims

Hamburg/Hanoi, 17 December 2015 – The Hamburg laboratory Bioglobe has developed a concept for genetic identification of hundreds of thousands of victims of the Vietnam War for the government of Vietnam. In the largest identification project of all times Hanoi intends to recover the victims of the Vietnam War from mass graves, genetically identify and hand the victims over to their families so that they can be honoured and buried in accordance with the culture. After about two years of project planning, last week Bioglobe founder and CEO Prof Dr Wolfgang Höppner was able to sign a contract that includes the technology transfer for the extensive project.

The background of the ambitious and historically unique project is a resolution by the Vietnamese government to exhume and identify soldiers and civilian victims of the Vietnam War who are buried in anonymous mass graves. The so-called “Project 150” was initiated by Premier Nguyen Tan Dung as the largest identification project of all times and involves several Vietnamese ministries as well as the internationally renowned International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).

Bioglobe was commissioned with the creation of a project plan on whose basis laboratories in Hanoi will be largely equipped with German technology so that identifications could be completed by the year 2020. Several trips to Hanoi were necessary in order to coordinate the procedure, in the course of which up to 1.4 million DNA samples must be identified. An initial project draft was discussed in the summer of 2014 within the scope of a workshop with anthropologists and forensic scientists from the USA, Korea and the Netherlands. The contract could finally be signed after a year of developmental work. “This highly sensitive project is a special challenge for us”, says Wolfgang Höppner. “We are confident that we can arrange it successfully.” In the first project step starting in February of 2016, six scientists from the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology shall be trained in the Bioglobe special laboratories in Hamburg.

Bioglobe is among the most renowned and advanced laboratories for molecular genetic services in Germany. It provides molecular genetic diagnostics, pharmacogenetics, the support of genetic studies and molecular biological experiments as well as technology advice.

Further information:

Bioglobe GmbH, Prof Dr Wolfgang Höppner
Grandweg 64, 22529 Hamburg
Tel.: +49 (0)40 429 346-0, info@bioglobe.net

Press contact:

we care communications GmbH, Angela Lehnert
Seewartenstraße 10 / Haus 5, 20459 Hamburg
Tel.: +49 (0)40 756 639-10, lehnert@wecare-communications.com