

## Russian Research Institutes Receive Samples from Abroad

Recent U.S. government actions target Russia's chemical and biological weapons programs, following an increase in Russian chemical weapons attacks. Sayari has investigated several Russian scientific research institutes and production facilities, long believed to be involved in the development and manufacture of chemical and biological weapons. Sayari uncovered multiple instances of scientific and medical collaboration between these research institutes and entities in Africa and Asia. This type of collaboration exposes foreign partners to significant regulatory risk.

This tip sheet provides foreign partners examples of this collaboration, the various forms it can take, and how it can provide living samples of infectious material to Russian research institutes.

### Recent U.S. Regulations Target Russian Scientific Research Institutes

On Mar. 2, 2021, the U.S. Secretary of State determined that the Government of Russia had used a chemical weapon in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In response, the U.S. government expanded sanctions and export restrictions on Russian scientific institutes:

- The U.S. State Department [added six Russian research institutes](#) to the CAATSA Section 231 List of Specified Persons that support the Russian defense or intelligence sectors.
- The U.S. State Department also [designated three research institutes, the FSB, the GRU, and two GRU officers](#) under Executive Order (E.O.) 13382.
- The U.S. Treasury Department [designated the Director of the FSB](#) under E.O. 13382.
- The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security [added 14 entities in Russia, Germany, and Switzerland](#) to the Entity List.

### Russian Research Institute Activity in Guinea

Sayari has investigated several scientific research institutes and production facilities in Russia, including the Vector State Research Center for Virology and Biotechnology (Vector). Vector existed as part of the Biopreparat biowarfare agency under the Soviet Union. Since the collapse of the

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Soviet Union, the facility ostensibly has dedicated itself to research and the development of vaccines for modern diseases. The existence of continued biowarfare research is presently unclear.

Since 2014, the Vector has interacted with the countries of West Africa to assist in the fight against Ebola. As part of this effort, in 2015, a Russian anti-epidemic, mobile laboratory was set up in Kindia, Guinea by Vector and United Company RUSAL (UC RUSAL). UC RUSAL, a Russian aluminum giant, has been operating in Guinea — where much of its bauxite is sourced — since 2001. The mobile laboratory works closely with the Guinean Institute for Biological Research (IRBAG), also based in Kindia.

In reviewing commercial trade data, Sayari found bills of lading that indicate that Vector received three shipments from IRBAG between December 2017 and November 2019:

Shipment Date	Shipment Description
Dec. 4, 2017	“infectious material containing viruses for scientific research in the area of infectious disease pathways”
Nov. 7, 2018	“microorganism cultures”
Nov. 19, 2019	“infectious material containing various viruses — frozen on dry ice. For research purposes, not for veterinary science”

## Russian Research Institute Activity in Vietnam

The Russian-Vietnamese Tropical Scientific Research and Technology Center is a research facility in Hanoi, Vietnam and is jointly run by Russia and Vietnam. The institute’s website indicates that the facility was originally established in 1988. Its focus is the study of tropical biology and medicine. In November 2018, then-Prime Minister Dmitriy Medvedev visited the center to award its general director, Nguyen Hong Du, the Order of Friendship.

Commercial trade data indicates that Vector received two shipments from the Russian-Vietnamese Tropical Scientific Research and Technology Center between August 2018 and August 2019:

Shipment Date	Shipment Description
Aug. 20, 2018	“other immune serums and blood fractions of human origin”
Aug. 27, 2019	“biological samples from domestic birds containing genetic markers of influenza virus. Not for veterinary use. For laboratory purposes. Biological samples from domestic birds containing genetic markers of the Bird Flu-50 virus. 1.0 ML samples.”