

Genome analysis available to individuals

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A laboratory in Germany said Monday it will make genome sequencing available to private individuals, the first European company to do so.

GATC Biotech AG in Constance will offer a routine analysis of human genomes, making it possible for people to have their genetic make-up decoded, the company said in a news release. The service still will focus primarily on the research sector and the pharmaceutical industry.

"Our aim is to decode a total of 100 human genomes by the end of 2010, says Peter Pohl, GATC Biotech chief executive said. "The findings obtained will be of use to the medical research sector and will result in significant advances in this field."

The cost of a standard analysis is about \$73,300, while one producing medical-value results would cost nearly \$1.5 million. Board member Markus Benz said he expects the price to fall over time.

"If the price comes down, it will be possible in the future to use the technology for diagnostic purposes in the same way as X-ray technology is used today," Benz said.

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