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Media Release

Sun Genomics sets up European subsidiary in Fribourg: first establishment of a US company in Western Switzerland without prior in-person meeting

A first for the canton of Fribourg and presumably for Switzerland: in the midst of the pandemic, San Diego, California-based company Sun Genomics established a subsidiary in Fribourg without prior site visits. This settlement was "virtually" completed because of the coronavirus crisis (COVID-19), which made mutual visits between the USA and Switzerland impossible. Therefore, all contacts, initiated by the GGBa representative in Southern California, took place exclusively by email and video conference over more than a year. The Swiss Integrative Center for Human Health (SICHH) on the blueFACTORY site, whose laboratory will perform analyses and other services for the US company, was the decisive factor in choosing Fribourg as its new European base. For Sun Genomics, which offers personalized probiotics for intestinal health, Fribourg is the first location outside the US.

The initial contact between the Fribourg Development Agency (FDA) and the US company took place in 2020 through the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa), the investment promotion agency for Western Switzerland. Sun Genomics was looking for a partner laboratory in Europe that, in addition to the gut test of the stool samples, could also ensure the entire supply chain for the tests, logistics, operations and data management. Therefore, FDA put the company in contact with SICHH on the blueFACTORY innovation park. A first video conference was held in July 2020. Hundreds of emails and umpteen video conferences later, the US company founded its Swiss subsidiary in June 2021: Floré Labs Switzerland Ltd.

The ideal partner found in Fribourg

Sunny Jain, Sun Genomics' founder & CEO, explains: *"Sun Genomics examined several locations in and outside of Switzerland. In Fribourg, we have found the ideal partner in SICHH, which has the competence to drive our international growth. We particularly appreciated SICHH's creativity and reactivity in putting together a specific plan around our needs and their excitement to see us bring our gut health test to the region."*

Dr. Lavinia Alberi Auber, Director & Lead in Neurology Research at SICHH, adds: *"Sun Genomics is an ideal partner for SICHH. The pioneering microbiome profiling and companion personalized probiotics of Sun Genomics represents an unprecedented example of remote patient journey in precision preventative medicine. SICHH is excited about this new cooperation, which will strengthen its competencies in the area of non-invasive diagnostics for human health."*

Sun Genomics, headquartered in San Diego, California, is active in the field of gut health. Founded in 2016, the company specializes in made-to-order probiotics based on an individual's gut microflora. This is determined using a special testing procedure of the stool sample. This approach ensures that customers receive a fully personalized probiotic that can be maintained in the form of a subscription. To date, the company has generated sales almost exclusively in the US. Sun Genomics expects to create around 15 new jobs and invest 2 million Swiss francs in the canton of Fribourg over the next five years.

Jerry Krattiger, Managing Director of the FDA: *“The Fribourg Development Agency is delighted to see that we are able even in the time of a pandemic to grow business and expand internationally in new and agile ways. It is, to our knowledge, the first concrete example of a company establishing a subsidiary without ever visiting personally or being visited by Swiss representatives, demonstrating that Western Switzerland in general, and Fribourg in particular, is the place to grow.”*

Olivier Curty, Minister of Economic Affairs of the Canton of Fribourg: *“As President of GGBa, I am particularly proud to welcome Sun Genomics to our blueFACTORY innovation park in Fribourg. This success resulted from the excellent initial targeting by GGBa representatives and the remarkable collaboration that followed between the various players, including my team at Fribourg Development Agency, GGBa, SICHH, as well as accounting, legal and banking professionals in Fribourg.”*

Currently, one person works for the Swiss subsidiary at SICHH in Fribourg. Floré Labs Switzerland will soon initiate an R&D project with SICHH to investigate the role of probiotics for Long-COVID patients. Probiotics will be developed based on microflora profiling, gut inflammation markers, and wellness information of individuals suffering from long-term effects of COVID.

Information

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Attachment

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Photo 1: SICHH Director Lavinia Alberi Auber (in the middle) with employees of Sun Genomics and SICHH (photo: STEMUTZ).

Photo 2: Employees of Sun Genomics and SICHH work together in the blueFACTORY innovation park in Fribourg (photo: STEMUTZ).

Photo 3: Sunny Jain, CEO and founder of Sun Genomics (photo: Sun Genomics).