

Ginkgo Bioworks to Build Infrastructure for Rapid Epidemic Response with \$70MM Investment

Strategic investment from Illumina and others enables large-scale COVID-19 testing using next generation sequencing

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Today, [Ginkgo Bioworks](#) is announcing a \$70MM investment from [Illumina](#) (Nasdaq: ILMN) and existing Ginkgo investors, General Atlantic and Viking Global Investors. This will enable Ginkgo to build the infrastructure that could enable rapid epidemic response. Large-scale testing is essential for slowing the spread of viruses; for COVID-19, experts suggest millions of tests are needed per day in the United States to control this epidemic. Ginkgo aims to achieve unprecedented scale with its automation capabilities, leveraging Illumina's next-generation sequencing (NGS) technology to enable widespread testing for COVID-19.

Originally designed for sequencing the 3 billion base pair human genome, NGS equipment can read, process and analyze many DNA and RNA samples in parallel on one machine. These machines can be utilized to detect the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, enabling tens of thousands of tests to be run at the same time on equipment the size of a washing machine. Coupled with Ginkgo's hardware and software that is designed for the large-scale automation of biological experiments, NGS has the potential to significantly increase COVID-19 testing capacity, contributing to the testing volume that many public health experts believe is necessary for slowing the spread of the virus.

Ginkgo is deploying its resources toward building an epidemic monitoring and diagnostic testing facility in its Boston Seaport labs, developing processes that use Illumina's NGS technology for large-scale testing, in addition to whole genome sequencing and environmental monitoring. Currently in an early build phase, Ginkgo aims to have NGS-based testing capacity available to help reopen schools and businesses. Additionally, Ginkgo has already made its current NGS capacity available at no cost to public health departments across the U.S. – this NGS data can aid public health efforts, such as contact tracing and understanding community spread. Whole genome sequencing data also provide deep insights for global research to track the virus and develop therapies and vaccines.

"As programmers of DNA, we recognize rapid pandemic response as an essential technology that must be built alongside biological engineering," said Jason Kelly, CEO and co-founder of Ginkgo Bioworks. "The infrastructure we are building for next-generation sequencing is critical for responding to the current pandemic, as well as providing early detection and response for the future."

Learn more about [Ginkgo's](#) COVID-19 response efforts.

About Ginkgo Bioworks

Headquartered in Boston, Ginkgo Bioworks uses biology to grow better products. The company's cell programming platform is enabling the growth of biotechnology across diverse markets, from food to fragrance to pharmaceuticals. For more information, visit www.ginkgobioworks.com.

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