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Cisco Will Assemble Boards in Zelenograd

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Cisco's headquarters in California. The IT giant plans to invest in creating a research and development center at Skolkovo as well as participate in the so-called virtual Skolkovo project. **Gary King**

ZELENOGRAD — Electronic components assembled for global technology company Cisco Systems began rolling off a Zelenograd assembly line Tuesday as part of the Silicon Valley company's commitment to invest in Russia.

Cisco has contracted with Altonika, a small electronics manufacturer, to complete printed circuit boards for its virtual private network equipment — elements of corporate networks that securely allow information transmission within a company.

The new agreement is a part of Cisco's pledge to invest $1 billion in the development of information technologies and entrepreneurship in Russia over the course of the next 10 years.

Altonika, a company with more than 20 years of manufacturing history that makes 4 million electronics items a year at its Zelenograd site, will install components on printed circuit boards made in Taiwan and China and test the assembled units. It has invested 200,000 euros ($290,000) in new equipment for the Cisco project, on top of its existing 1 million euro budget for equipment upgrades.

Cisco Russia's general manager Pavel Betsis said cooperation with Skolkovo is at the top of the company's priority list.

The IT giant plans to invest in creating a research and development center at Skolkovo as well as participate in the so-called virtual Skolkovo project, which will unite specialists, venture capitalists and academia in an ecosystem before the actual city of Skolkovo is built in 2015.

"We are very happy with [Skolkovo's] progress. ... It has only been a year since Skolkovo was launched, and much more has been achieved than we even hoped for," Betsis told The Moscow Times.

The company, which sponsors a worldwide competition for startups to access Cisco venture capital, opened up the third phase of the program to Russian entrepreneurs starting in November of last year, and received more than 2,000 applications — more than it had globally during the first two years of the competition, Betsis said.

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