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IBM to Share Technology With Reiman's Firm

By Rachel Nielsen

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International Business Machines has struck a deal to provide designs for chipset production to domestic chipmaker Angstrem, a step by the global electronics giant to gain a bigger footprint here.

Until this and another partnership for microelectronics development were signed this year, International Business Machines "did not have any good collaborations" in Russia's microelectronics industry, said Michael Wirth, a business development executive with IBM Russia & CIS.

"We are constantly looking for partners," he said by telephone.

IBM signed the memorandum with Angstrem on Wednesday at Moscow's Open Innovations forum on next-generation technology and venture funding, Wirth said. The news was first reported by Vedomosti.

Under the memorandum, U.S.-based IBM will share intellectual property related to the manufacturing process of its 90-nanometer chipset. It also will assist Angstrem in setting up production.

Based in Zelenograd, Angstrem began as a state scientific organization in 1963 and became a shareholder-owned company in 1993, according to its website.

Wirth called it "one of the leading microelectronics companies here in Russia."

Angstrem is owned by former top communications official Leonid Reiman, Vedomosti and CNews have reported. Reiman served as communications and information technology minister from 1999 to 2008.

On Monday, CNews said the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service had approved the purchase of 100 percent of division Angstrem-T by Angstrem, which is owned by the ex-minister. Reiman confirmed the deal to CNews, it said.

German prosecutors implicated Reiman in a scheme in which five other men were charged with laundering 150 million euros ($190 million), though the charges were dropped in April.

Responding to a question about Reiman's reputation, Wirth said IBM's cooperation with Angstrem is "very transparent."

At the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in July, IBM signed an agreement with technology firm ITFY and Rusnano, Russian Venture Company, Rostelecom and the Skolkovo Foundation. Under the memorandum, a microelectronics center will be created at the Skolkovo innovation hub outside Moscow and have access to IBM's intellectual property for chip design.

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