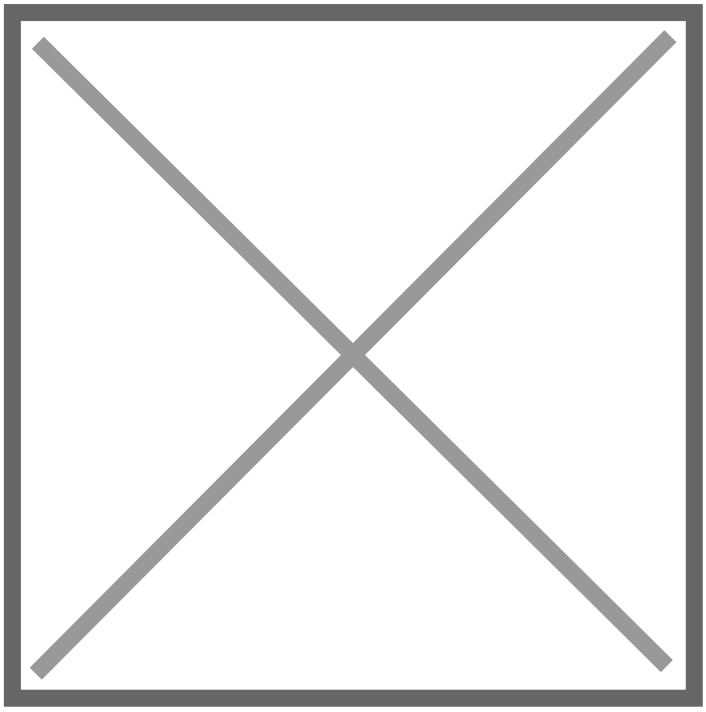
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Wipro ties up with Avesthagen

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Wipro seems to be focussed on ramping up its competence in biotechnology. It has recently entered into an alliance with the biotech company Avestha Gengraine (Avesthagen) to exploit the convergence between information technology and biotechnology.

The two companies have an open-ended agreement to work on projects that require competence in both their areas. The two companies are equal partners bringing in their domain expertise in the areas of biotechnology and information technology respectively.

Avesthagen's research focuses on agricultural biotech and has an expertise in population genomics which could be leveraged by Wipro's newly-formed Wipro Healthcare and Life Science, which needs the biology related expertise.

The biotech firm is also involved in bioinformatics, which is basically an inhouse support system for gene discovery, annotation of genes and software development.

Sources said that the two organisations expect their synergies to help establish their presence as leading players in the IT-BT convergence area. Together they will be targetting companies in the west that are looking to outsource projects in this area to Indian companies.

IT companies venturing into the biotech arena are increasingly forging alliances with other organizations for this reason. Tata Consultancy Services has a partnership with the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting Diagnostics at Hyderabad and Bangalore based Strand Genomics has a partnership with Syngene.

Wipro recently created a new business to look at the healthcare and bio-IT sector in a big way. In biotechnology, the company plans to focus on developing bio-informatics solutions for life science companies to reduce the drug discovery cycle time and also to offer solutions to medical and analytical device companies.