



Roche Invests in Sequencing Startup Stratos Genomics; Will Help Develop Nanopore Technology

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NEW YORK (GenomeWeb) — Roche said today that it has made a strategic investment in nanopore sequencing startup Stratos Genomics and is collaborating to further develop the firm's sequencing chemistry.

Last month, Seattle-based Stratos disclosed that it had [raised \\$10 million towards a \\$16.3 million Series B financing round](#). A Roche spokesperson told *GWDN* today that Roche contributed an undisclosed portion of that funding, "with additional funds to come pending milestones reached in our agreement."

Roche researchers will work with Stratos scientists to develop the company's [Sequencing by Expansion](#) method, which converts DNA into larger surrogate molecules, so-called Xpandomers, that are read out by a protein nanopore. To make an Xpandomer, a polymerase links together X-NTPs, building blocks with an expandable hairpin and a reporter molecule.

Specifically, Roche's team will contribute its expertise in protein design, polymerase mutagenesis, modified nucleotide chemistries, and rare reagent manufacturing in order to devise "efficient, low-cost sample preparation methods" for DNA Xpandomers.

This is the second deal Roche has struck with a sequencing technology firm within a few weeks. Earlier this month, Roche agreed to [acquire nanopore-sequencing startup Genia Technologies](#) for up to \$350 million, consisting of \$125 million in cash and up to \$225 million in milestone payments.

"The goal of our research collaboration with Stratos Genomics and the recent acquisition of Genia Technologies is to capitalize on the promise of nanopore sequencing and put Roche on a path to introduce a potentially disruptive technology to the sequencing market," Dan Zabrowski, head of the Roche Sequencing Unit, said in a statement.

Any commercial nanopore sequencer developed by Roche and its collaborators will likely compete in the market with Oxford Nanopore Technologies, which is in the midst of an early-access program for [its Minlon nanopore sequencer](#).

Illumina [licensed nanopore sequencing technology](#) from the University of Washington and the University of Alabama last year and has said that it is developing its own nanopore sequencer.

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