

Government Approves Volgograd's Plans for 2018 World Cup

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The Russian government said Sunday it had approved the main part of the World Cup stadium project for the city of Volgograd, which will host matches during the 2018 tournament.

Construction of the 45,000-seat stadium will be funded by the state budget, the government said on the Cabinet website, without revealing cost estimates. The project also includes the construction of parking lots and the potential reconstruction of a water treatment plant in the area.

A poll published last week by Russia's state-run Public Opinion Foundation found that 58 percent of Russians are in favor of their country hosting the World Cup. Another 10 percent of the population was found to disapprove of the country's hosting of the next tournament.

The poll — which was conducted on a representative sample of 1,500 people in 43 Russian regions in late July and carries a 3.6 percent margin of error — also found that 39 percent of the population think the tournament will have a positive impact on the country's economy.

Another 28 percent voiced the opinion that it would negatively impact the economy.

Russia is set to host the 2018 World Cup from June 8 to July 8 in 11 cities, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Volgograd and Kazan. The government said in March it would allocate 620.5 billion rubles (\$17.2 billion) for the event.

The country's sports minister, Vitaly Mutko, said last week that 12 stadiums still need to be built, along with 64 training facilities and 102 training pitches, to accommodate the 32 teams that will participate in the World Cup.

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