

Bidders Line Up for Skolkovo City Plan

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Well-known firms are competing for the right to design the upcoming innovation city in Skolkovo, including several that are doing the design work for the 2012 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vladivostok.

The Skolkovo Development Foundation stopped accepting applications to develop a plan for the innovation city on Thursday. Vedomosti has obtained a list of 12 companies that submitted applications by the middle of the day. A spokesperson for the foundation said, however, that several others could submit applications before the midnight deadline.

The contest was announced on July 29, 2010, and is being held in two stages. In the first stage, three to five companies will be chosen from those that submitted applications, and will be given design tasks.

The description of the contest posted on the innovation city's web site did not elaborate on what the city itself should be like, saying only that it would be judged based on environmental sustainability, ergonomics, energy-efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. The description also

said that only companies that have implemented large, world-class projects can participate.

The maximum price for the project development is 195,000 euros (\$249,000). The price tag is small but possible for such a project, said Alexander Kudryavtsev, president of the Russian Academy of Architecture and Construction Science. But they probably shouldn't have indicated that lower bids would be welcomed, since that could negatively impact the quality of the proposals, he said.

The rules for accepting applications are completely reasonable and democratic, said Sergei Sitar, editor of the architecture magazine *Proyekt International*. He added, however, that the registration procedure was not very clear and that the preparation period was too short.

The applications will be considered by the Skolkovo city planning council, which is still being formed, along with Swiss firm Maxmakers, which won a tender to be a consultant for the project, a spokesperson for the Skolkovo Development Foundation said.

There was no way to extend the tight development schedule, the spokesperson said. Including the second round of the bidding, the design work for the innovation city has to start by the end of this year or the beginning of the next.

There are no companies in the world that would be able to respond to such an investment request alone, said Martin Bouygues, a Skolkovo council member and president of France's Bouygues industrial group. They need to give the designers the ability to cooperate and put together a team of the best people available, he said.

Among the bidders was London-based Arup, one of the two world leaders in the field of new technologies in architecture and construction, Sitar said. One of the company's best-known projects is the Olympic pool in Beijing. Arup also built the head office of British American Tobacco in Russia.

Another prominent bidder was Spanish architect Ricardo Bofill and his firm. In the postmodern 1980s, he was very popular, designing buildings in the style of the Seven Sister high-rises, Sitar said. This year, the Barcelona airport, which Bofill designed, was declared the best European airport by the European Association of Airports. Inteko said it would begin working with him in the beginning of August.

Royal Haskoning, along with fellow Skolkovo bidders Arup and U.S. firm Perkins Eastman, took part in the development of a concept design for Russky Island, which is to host the APEC summit in 2012. Another bidder, Danish firm Ramboll, became the head engineer of the Pulkovo Airport on June 9.

Kudryavtsev, of the architecture academy, stressed that the firms bidding were not as important as the architects they select to work with. According to the conditions of the bidding, the architects are supposed to be indicated in the applications.

The bidders included three Russian companies: Spektrum Group, ADM Partnership and architectural bureau ARPM. The other international bidders included France's AREP, Germany's AS&P, Singapore's Jurong and Sweden's Sweco.

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