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# Skolkovo Might Host G8 2014 Summit

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The pace of infrastructure and facility construction could pick up at Skolkovo if the site is to host the G8 meeting. **Sergei Nikolayev**

Skolkovo innovation city might be chosen as the venue for the G8 summit to be held in Russia in 2014, a Skolkovo Foundation official said Tuesday.

"We've heard that there's such an option," the foundation's chief spokesman Alexander Chernov told The Moscow Times.

Chernov said, however, that he's unaware whether there are any official decisions, but "if such a decision is made, it will be ... a serious challenge" for those in charge of the Skolkovo project.

Skolkovo innovation center is President Dmitry Medvedev's brainchild and supposed to become the Russian version of Silicon Valley. Skolkovo Foundation is the governing body that is overseeing the creation of the innovation hub located in the Moscow region town of Skolkovo.

Medvedev's economic aide Arkady Dvorkovich said earlier this month that holding the summit in Moscow is "most likely" and hinted that a possible venue could be located outside the city center.

"Moscow is big now," he said, referring to the Kremlin's plan to expand Moscow's boundaries.

He added, however, that no official decisions on the summit venue had been made yet.

Medvedev appointed Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin earlier this month to oversee the preparation for the G8 summit, a forum for the leaders of the world's eight largest economies — Russia, the United States, Britain, France, Japan, Germany, Canada and Italy.

Chernov said the opportunity to hold the summit in Skolkovo would be an additional impetus for the development of the innovation city.

Skolkovo's infrastructure will be sufficiently developed by 2014 to allow the innovative hub to host the event, he said by telephone.

A spokesman for Sobyanin declined to comment on the issue Tuesday.

Holding the summit in Skolkovo makes sense only if preparation for the event doesn't result in additional costs for the federal budget, Finam analyst Dmitry Baranov said.

If Skolkovo hosts the summit, substantial preparations at the hub might be not needed, because Russia has experience hosting big events, said Fyodor Lukyanov, editor-in-chief of Russia in Global Affairs magazine.

"Skolkovo is an internationally known brand, which would be a symbol of the new, modernized Russia," he said by telephone.

Russia will take over hosting the G8 summit after Britain, in line with the rotation procedure. It last hosted the event in St. Petersburg in 2006.

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