

Poll Reveals Skepticism Over Olympic Spending

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Almost two-thirds of Russians think that government money is being put to poor use on preparations to host next year's Winter Olympics, pollsters said Thursday.

The Games are set to be the most expensive in history, and 65 percent of those questioned said the government's spending was either "ineffective," "completely ineffective" or even "simply being stolen," an option chosen by 19 percent of respondents.

Just 2 percent rated the spending "very effective" and another 20 percent "fairly effective."

The question referred solely to federal budget money set to be spent on the Olympics, predicted to amount to 700 billion rubles (\$21 billion). The total budget is about \$46 billion and much of the non-budget funding comes from state-run companies.

The local survey echoes Britons' lack of confidence before hosting the Olympics in August last

year. Four months before the opening ceremony, pollsters found 64 percent of British adults thought London 2012 cost too much, but four months after the Games ended, another poll found 80 percent rated them good value for money.

Russia's first Winter Olympics have attracted repeated claims of large-scale corruption. A report last month authored by opposition leader and former First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov claimed as much as \$30 billion may have gone missing but did not provide hard evidence.

Despite the lack of faith in fiscal prudence at the Olympics, 62 percent of those questioned in Thursday's poll said they remained proud of hosting Sochi 2014, although that was a drop of six percentage points on last year.

The poll was conducted by the independent Levada Center, which questioned 1,601 people and reported a margin of error of 3.4 percent.

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