

Russia Vows 'Best Model' for Sochi 2014 Olympics

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A torch bearer sailing along the Volga River during a relay in Tver on Friday with the Olympic torch held high.

Russia's compact "two-cluster" concept for February's Winter Olympics in Sochi will make the event one of the best Olympics in history and eliminate tedious travel time that afflicted Vancouver 2010, Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said.

Russia claims to be holding the most compact Games ever, with all venues confined to a mountain cluster and a coastal cluster separated by a 30-minute train ride in the Black Sea resort.

"These will be one of the best Olympics from a governing model point of view — two Olympic villages, one Olympic Park — this has never featured anywhere before," Mutko told lawmakers in the lower house of parliament Friday.

"In Vancouver, we would spend two hours getting from venue to venue," he said.

The weakness of Sochi's bid — the lack of any existing infrastructure — was also its strength, as it allowed authorities to plan the most efficient Olympic city design from scratch, the organizers say.

Building work — estimated to have cost in excess of \$50 billion, making the Games the most expensive ever — began in 2007, and all the venues are now complete, although organizers are in a rush to complete the surrounding infrastructure in time for the Feb. 7 opening ceremony.

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