

# Russia promises 'green' 2014 Games

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People fish on the seafront of the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi on January 14, 2013. The head of Russia's Olympic committee said Wednesday that his country was set to host the greenest Games ever when the winter version of the sports extravaganza opens in the Black Sea resort of Sochi in a year's time.

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"At the moment we are in great shape," Dmitry Chernyshenko told reporters in Moscow. "All competition venues are commissioned and we are right in the middle of the most important and intensive part of the preparations for the Games."

Russia's sports-mad President [Vladimir Putin](#) secured the palm-tree-lined city the unlikely title of Winter Olympic capital after putting up a firm defence of its candidacy while prime minister in 2007.

The city has since been transformed through a multi-billion-dollar investment programme that has seen new roads built and stadiums erected from scratch.

Some reports have estimated total state and private spending at \$20 billion and higher. Chernyshenko only cited the government's low-end estimate of less than \$7 billion.

Economists have questioned the long-term benefits of the project while environmentalists worry about the damage done to local wildlife and [nature reserves](#).

But Chernyshenko promised to deliver the greenest Games ever that made the environment around Sochi better taken care of than it had been before.

"We are delivering the 'Green Games' and since our bidding campaign we were committed not only to protecting the environment... but (also) dramatically enhancing the environmental situation."

"This is new to our country," he added. "This is the first step to demonstrate that you can build an [environment](#) in harmony with nature."

The Sochi Games will begin on February 7, 2014.

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