



# ISOCARP

## Knowledge for better Cities

### Introduction

The 2014 Young Planning Professional National Workshop focused on one of the major open spaces in Moscow: VDNH (rus. ВДНХ - Выставка Достижений Народного Хозяйства) - the underutilised 237.5 ha site of the Soviet State industrial exhibition. Originally, this area exhibited the agricultural, industrial, and economic achievements of the USSR. Today, this former expo ground faces the next turning point in its history. After years of neglect that followed the privatisation and commercialisation, the President of the Russian Federation transferred the majority of ownership rights to the Moscow Government with the task to improve and manage the site's condition.

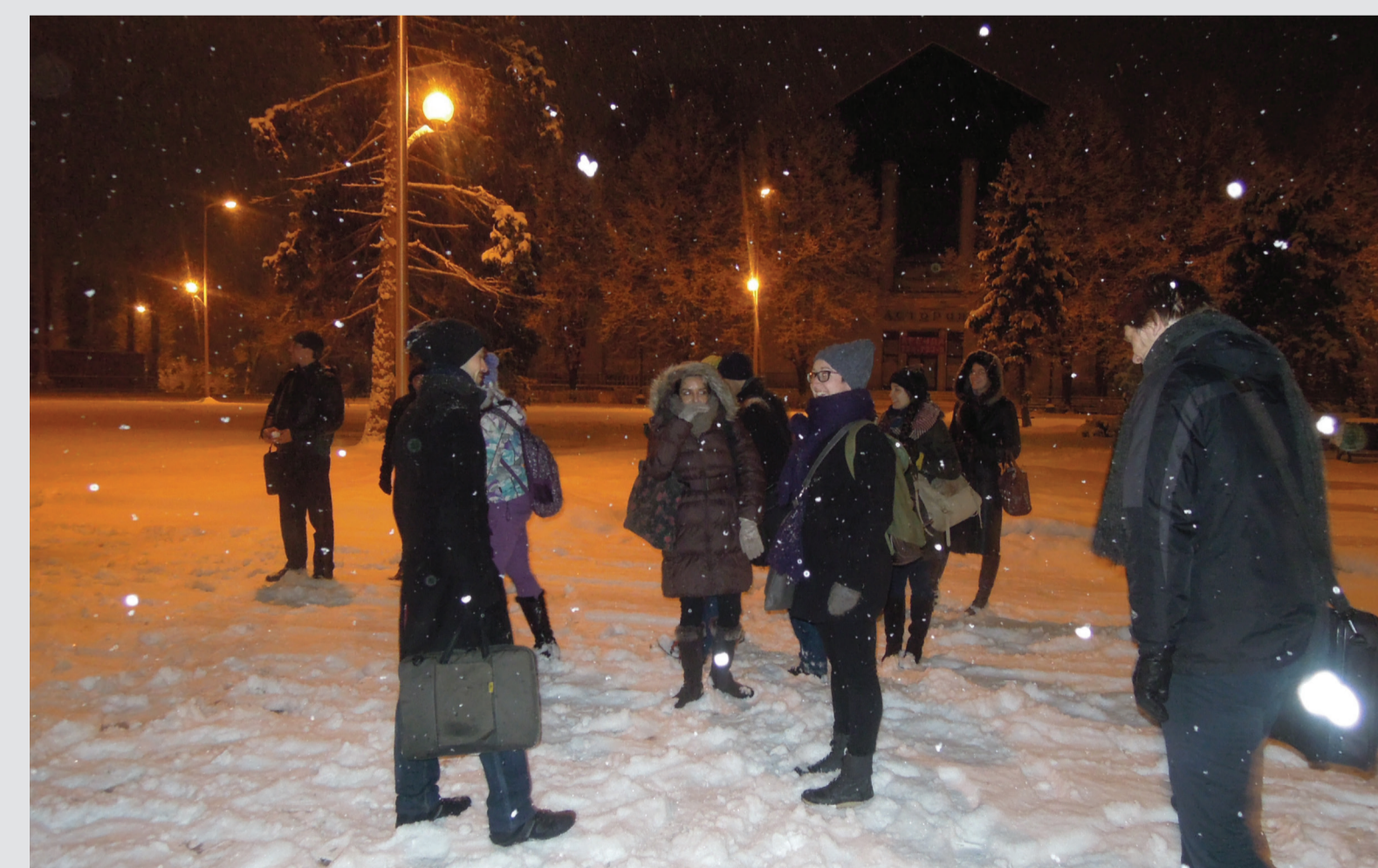


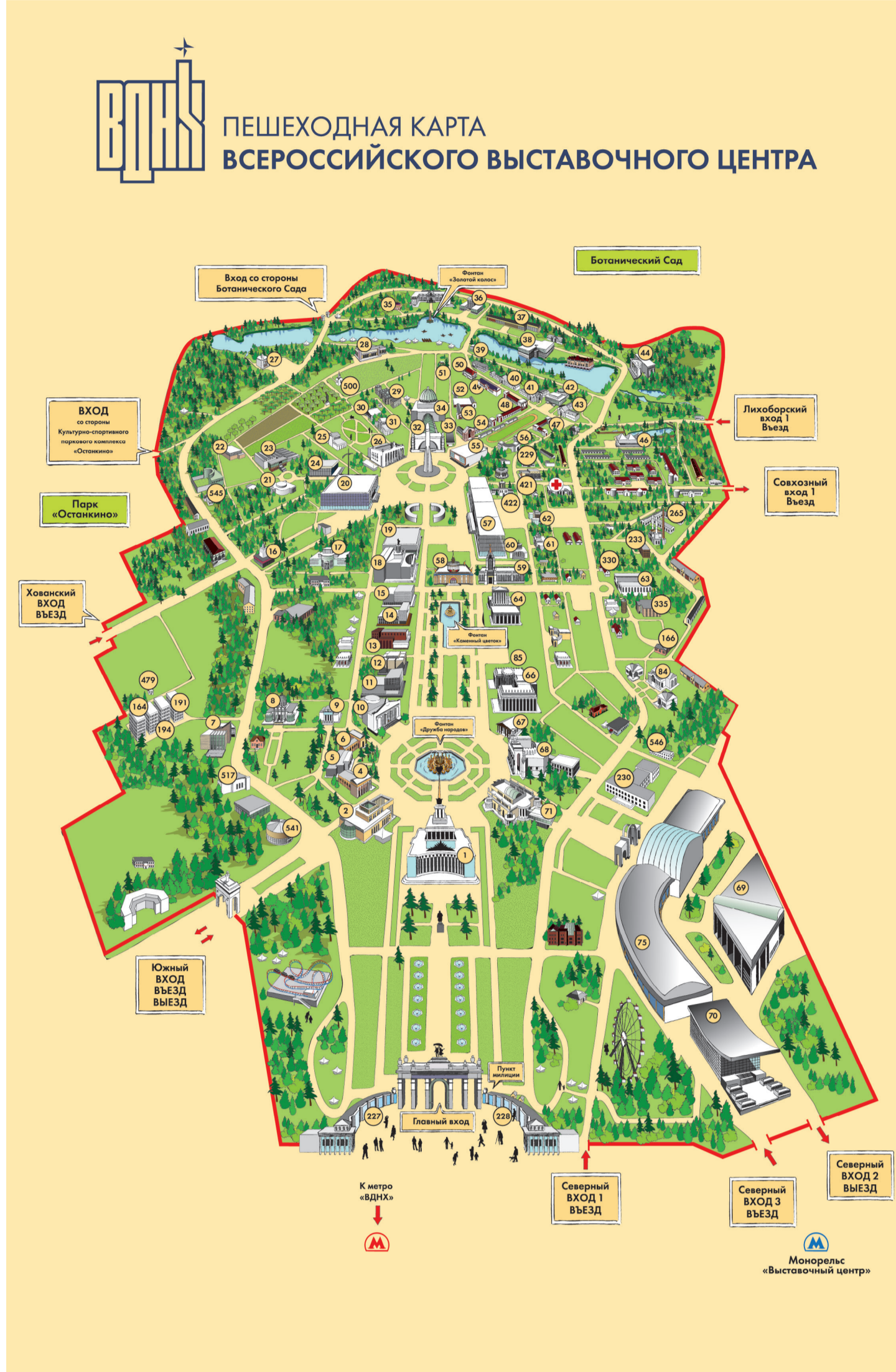
The YPP workshop focused on achieving two major aims. First, finding ways to reuse the expo site, and integrate it into the larger development plans of the Moscow metropolitan area. The future plans of improving Moscow's public spaces and quality of life were considered as the context of the site's design. The second aspect concerned reusing and preserving the Soviet heritage. VDNH holds a unique collection of architectural artefacts of various periods of USSR history in a large masterplanned setting. The challenge was to devise methods to protect the heritage of the former State and its culture as it forms an important part of modern Russia's history.

#### List of participants

- Amira Ahmad *Russia / Egypt*
- Anastasya Klyputenko *Russia*
- Andrey Yelbayev *Russia*
- Anna Nagornaya *Russia,*
- Chi (Angel) Hsiao *China*
- Dmitrii Boiko *Russia*
- Evgeniya (Jane) Belashova *Russia*
- Farid Latroch *Algeria*
- Gizem Caner *Cyprus / Turkey*
- Kseniia Mezenina *Russia*
- Maria Luchnikova *Russia*
- Maria Zakharova *Russia*
- Marina Dubova *Russia*
- Mohamed Abdallah Ramadan *Libanon*
- Morteza Yaghoubkhani *Iran*
- Nataliya Volkova *Russia*
- Noel Alcides Sampson Ortega *Nicaragua*
- Oxana Veselkova *Russia*
- Peter Nejru Njue *Kenya*
- Sarah Brennan *Australia*
- Timur Kadyrov *Russia*
- Wouter Pocornie *The Netherlands*
- Yelena Tyo *Kazakhstan*
- Zofia Krzykawska *Poland*

The participants of the YPP National Workshop were given a unique opportunity to engage in an interdisciplinary assignment on an unparalleled real life planning problem. They were put in a position of decision makers to build a realistic strategy for the development of VDNH for the long term future. Within an intense four day workshop, the participants came up with solutions in cooperation with fellow young planning professionals from all over the world. In this year's challenge, 24 participants from 13 countries, including 13 young Russian partners took part. Seven participants were living in the Moscow region, and six came from other cities across Russia. The key idea of the YPP workshop, was to provide an opportunity for young planners to work and exchange experience and perspectives with each other.

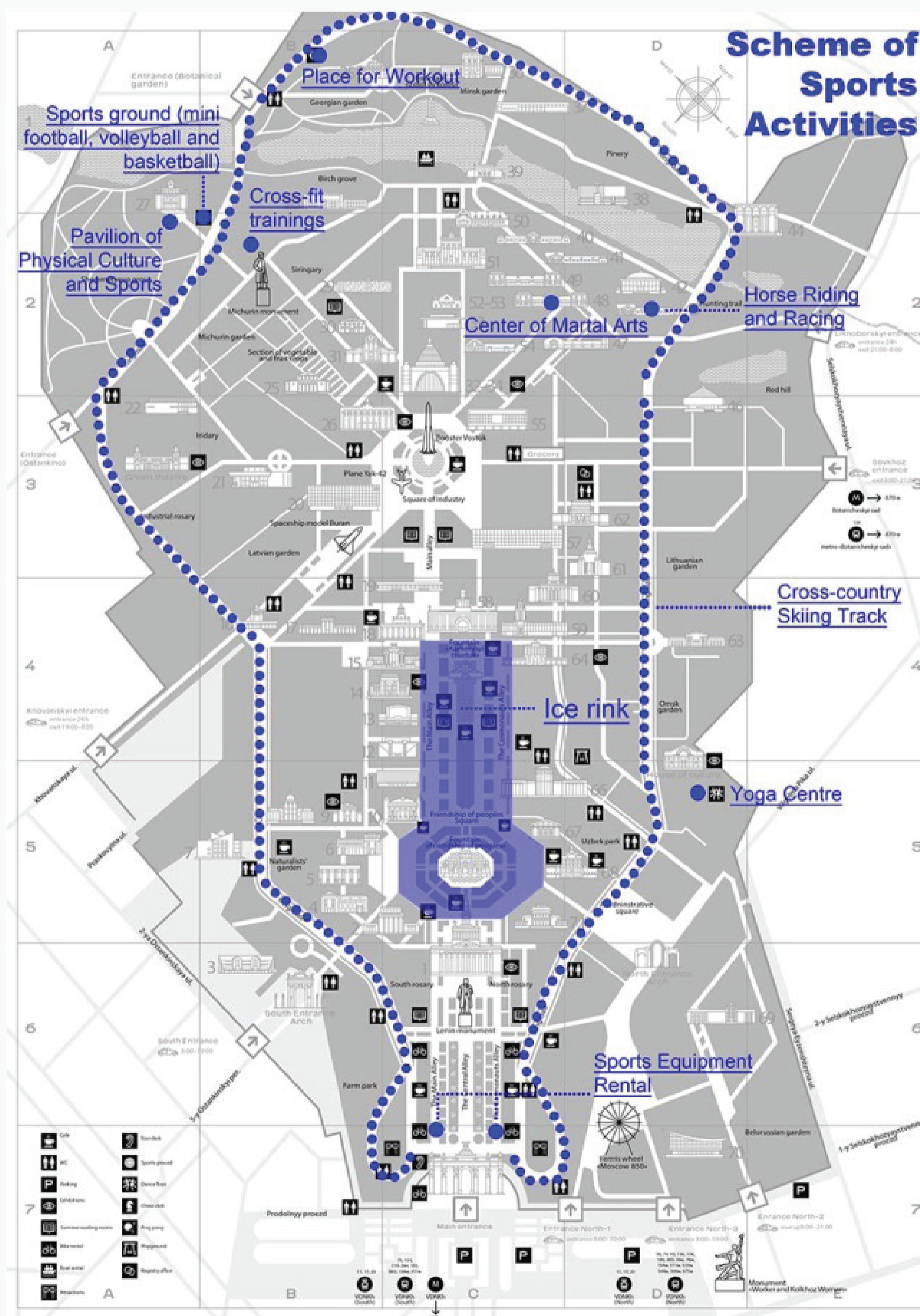
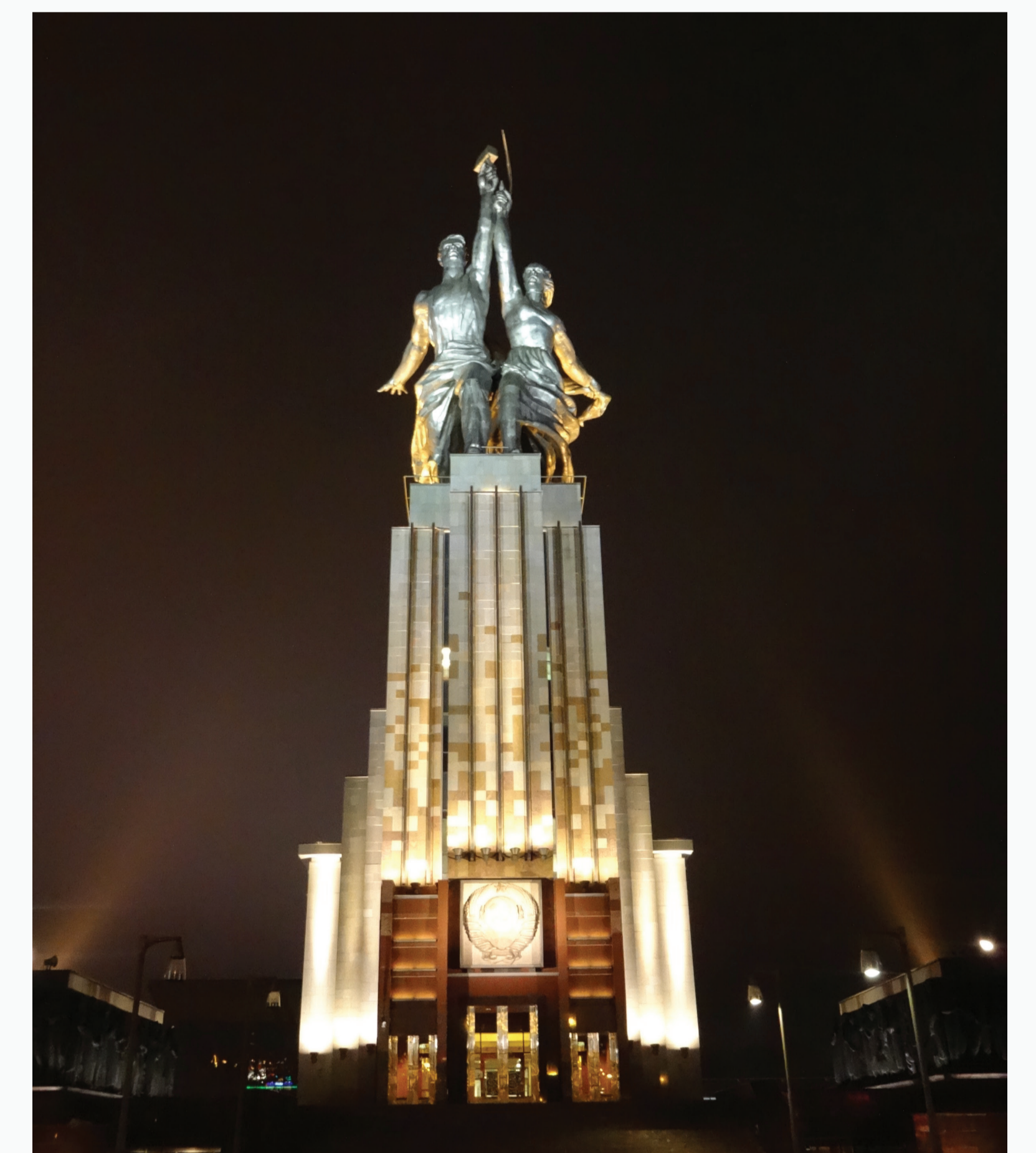




## VDNH

VDNH and its emblematic Soviet heritage form a unique place within Moscow, Russia, and the world. The non-human scale of the exhibition makes it clear that this area was built to impress. Amidst the monumental pavilions, statues of former Soviet Union leaders and other prominent people show a glimpse of their former glory. The Cosmos Pavilion, the rocket, the Main Pavilion, and the Wheel are identifying features. Outside VDNH, attention is drawn to the sculpture of Rabochiy I Kolkhoznitsa, the Space Monument, and Ostankino Tower. Originally, the exhibition was set up with a rigid spatial structure in the centre. Yet, due to the loss of buildings, and the addition of new buildings without considering the masterplan, the composition of the exhibition is hampered, and the buildings become more scattered towards the borders. Additionally, several of the historic buildings are in bad condition due to inappropriate use and neglect.

First and foremost, VDNH is an exhibition area, with over 100 exhibitions a year. Each year, VDNH attracts around 19 million visitors. Part of this success lies in the various activities at the site. VDNH has something to offer everyone. Tourists come here to wonder about the Soviet heritage, and for many Muscovites it is a place for recreation. The summer is the most attractive season, and some pavilions are only open then. This is the time for open air leisure activities. People take a stroll, ride bikes, and roller blade. This is the season for the open amphitheatre and the amusement park, for open air games, water activities, summer reading rooms, and cafés. Also special events such as the Olympics 'Mechanics of Miracle', and festivals as the Moscow International Festival and Park Live take place at VDNH. In winter, VDNH is renowned for its ice skate ring, which is visited by many people. In weekends you will probably find yourself standing in line to enter the ring. Another winter activity is a creative festival for children in the House of Culture.



VDNH is seen as a park that belongs to all, a place for all people. Someone even called it the 'normal citizens celebration area'. Yet, many people know only the central area where most activities take place. Tourists tend to think that people from Moscow or Russia do not know the place, or are just not interested in it because of its Soviet past. This past makes it, however, interesting for tourists when visiting Moscow. Yet, for many people in Russia, and even in former Soviet states, it is seen as a gigantic exhibition that you should see at least once in your lifetime.



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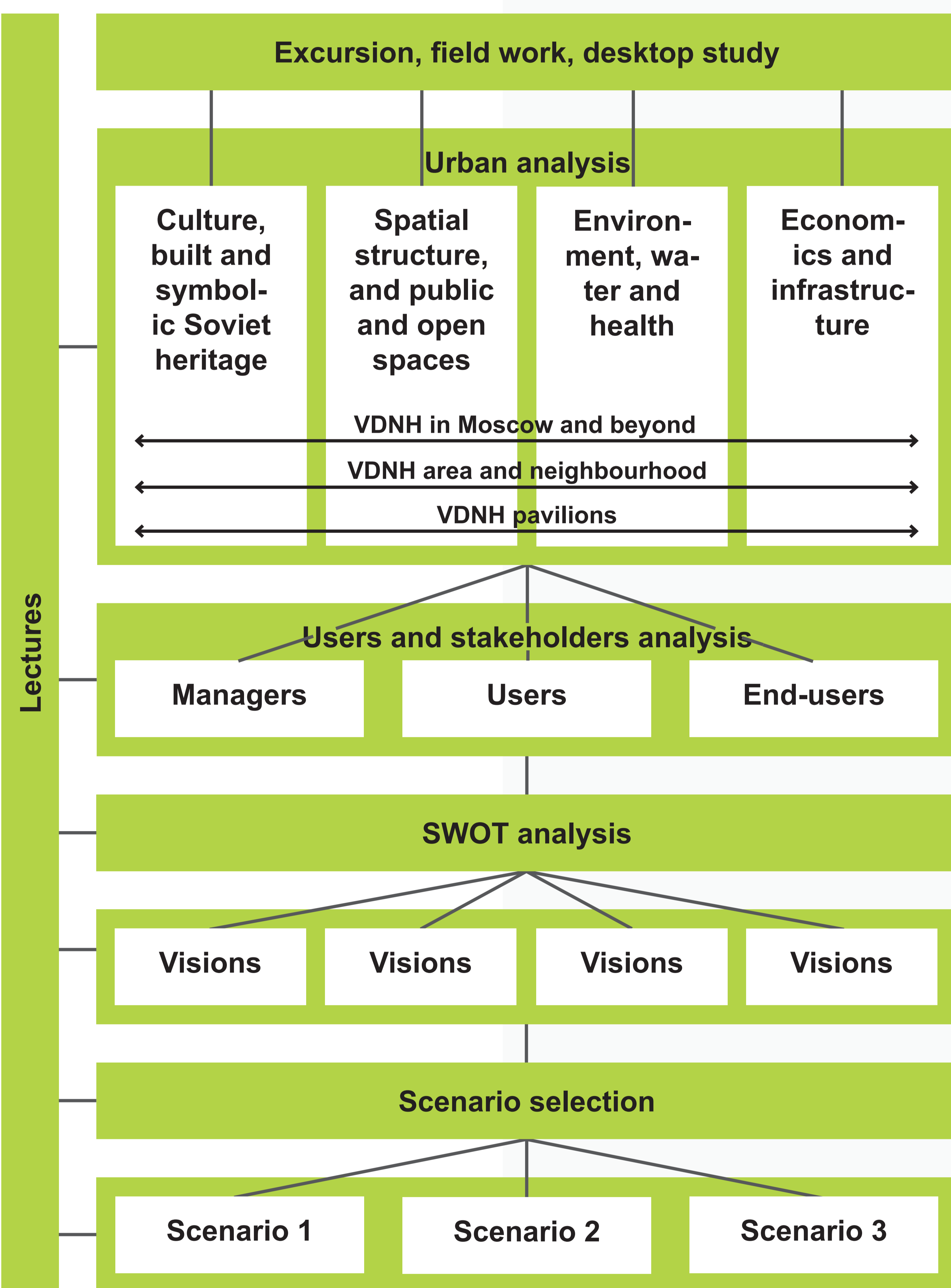


## Methodology

The workshop followed a classical set-up of analysis, synthesis, and design. This set-up allowed to first get a grip on the complexity of the VDNH site, and especially for the international participants to gain an understanding of the Russian context. During the workshop participants were invited to use various tested planning methods which would help them to move from analysis to early visions and ideas into final proposals with realistic steps to achieve it.

The participants were asked to include the following questions from the very beginning of the design process:

- How to balance the needs for heritage protection and the demand for economic development of the area?
- Which role can VDNH fulfil in Moscow? Does Moscow need a new park, a recreational area, or an expo site and how can VDNH fit in?
- Who are the current and future users of VDNH? Will the area be supported by residents of the surrounding areas, Muscovites, or will it have a wider outreach? Will VDNH be run by a public or private organisation? Are there any businesses that can support VDNH without compromising its unique character and heritage?
- Who will pay for the development and management of VDNH, and how? How can future development and heritage conservation be financed? And what are the options beyond public funding to raise money for the upkeep of VDNH?

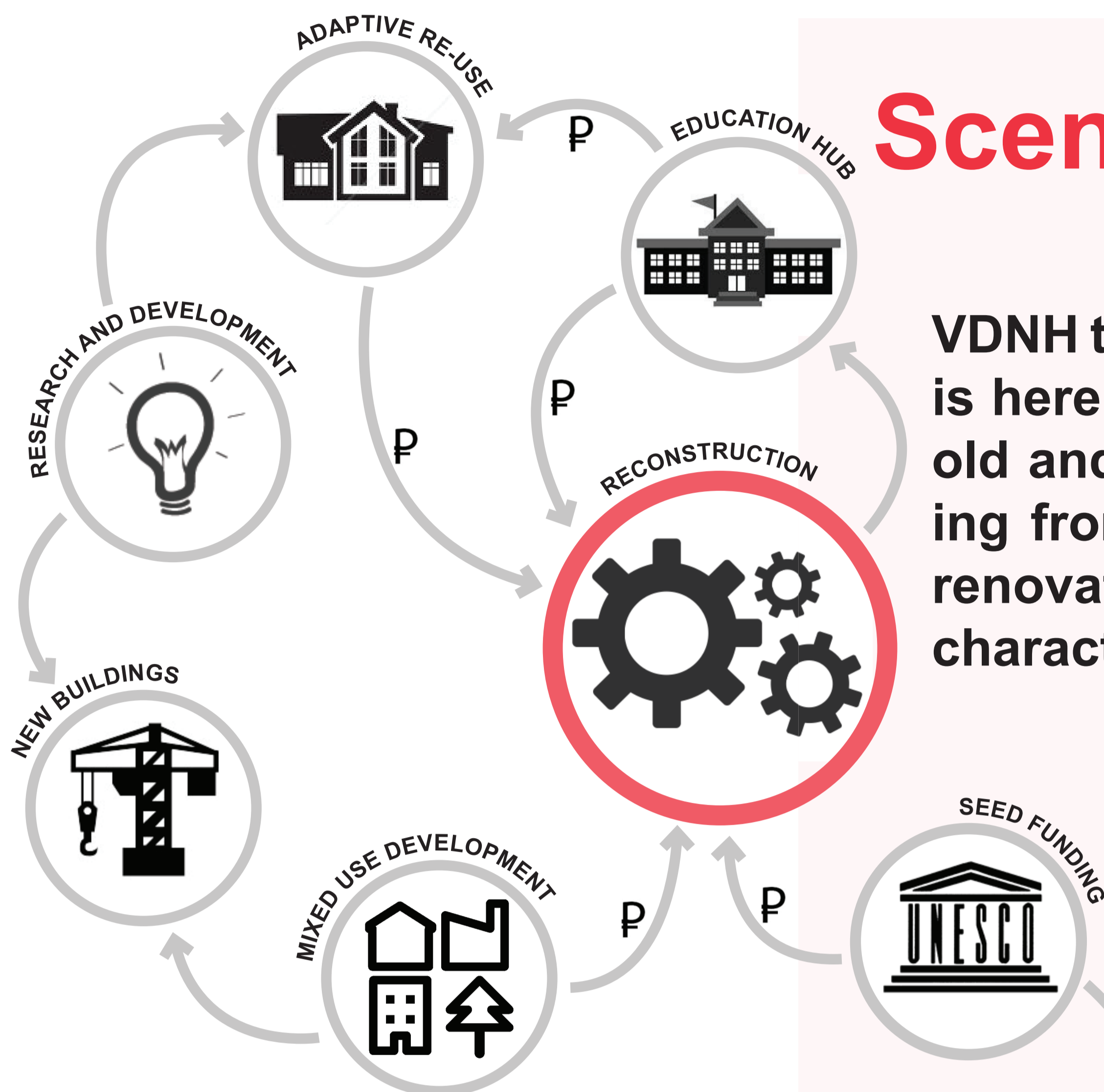


The input for the analysis came from an excursion, further field work, and desktop studies. Additional input was provided through lectures in the first three days of the workshop. The analysis was divided into four topics to gain information on different aspects. For each topic, the participants had to look at three scale levels. As VDNH was in need of a development strategy, an additional users and stakeholders analysis was conducted. The results from the analysis, and the users and stakeholders analysis formed input for a plenary SWOT analysis. With the SWOT analysis fresh in mind, the participants were then asked to brainstorm in four groups about visions for the future of VDNH. The purpose of the brainstorm was to come up with out-of-the-box ideas that would trigger discussion or new perceptions on VDNH. These visions would form input for selection of the three scenarios. Each of these three scenarios, ultimately, provide input for final solutions.

The workshop was alternately divided into individual group work and plenary sessions. Through the plenary sessions, the participants provided each other with information which could be used in the next step of the process. The group compositions were changed each time to mix insights from the analyses and the visions. Although a general scheme for the workshop was set-up, the workshop was deliberately kept more open and flexible to the end. The emerging work and results of the participants directed the process and the final outcomes.

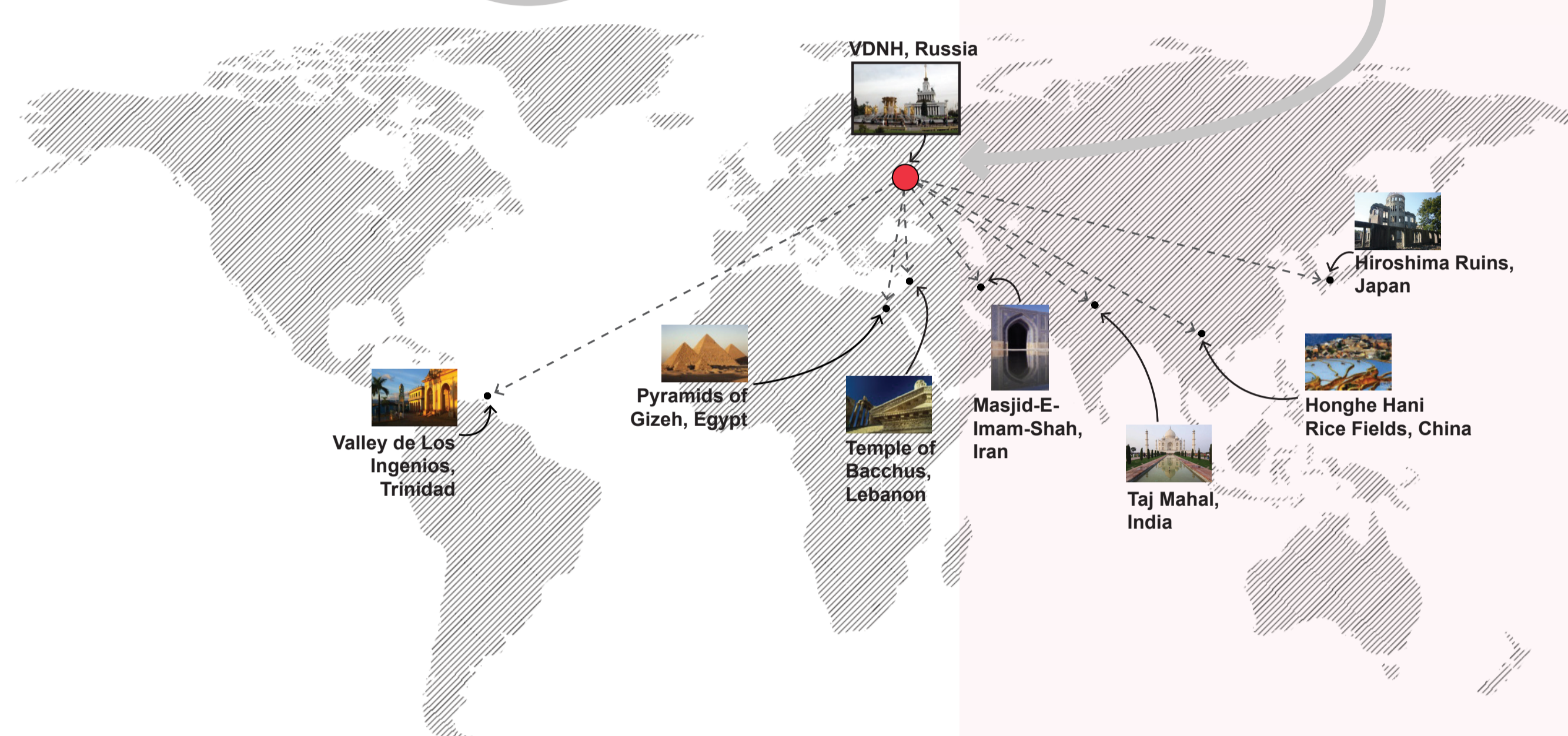


## Scenario 1 Heritage Preservation



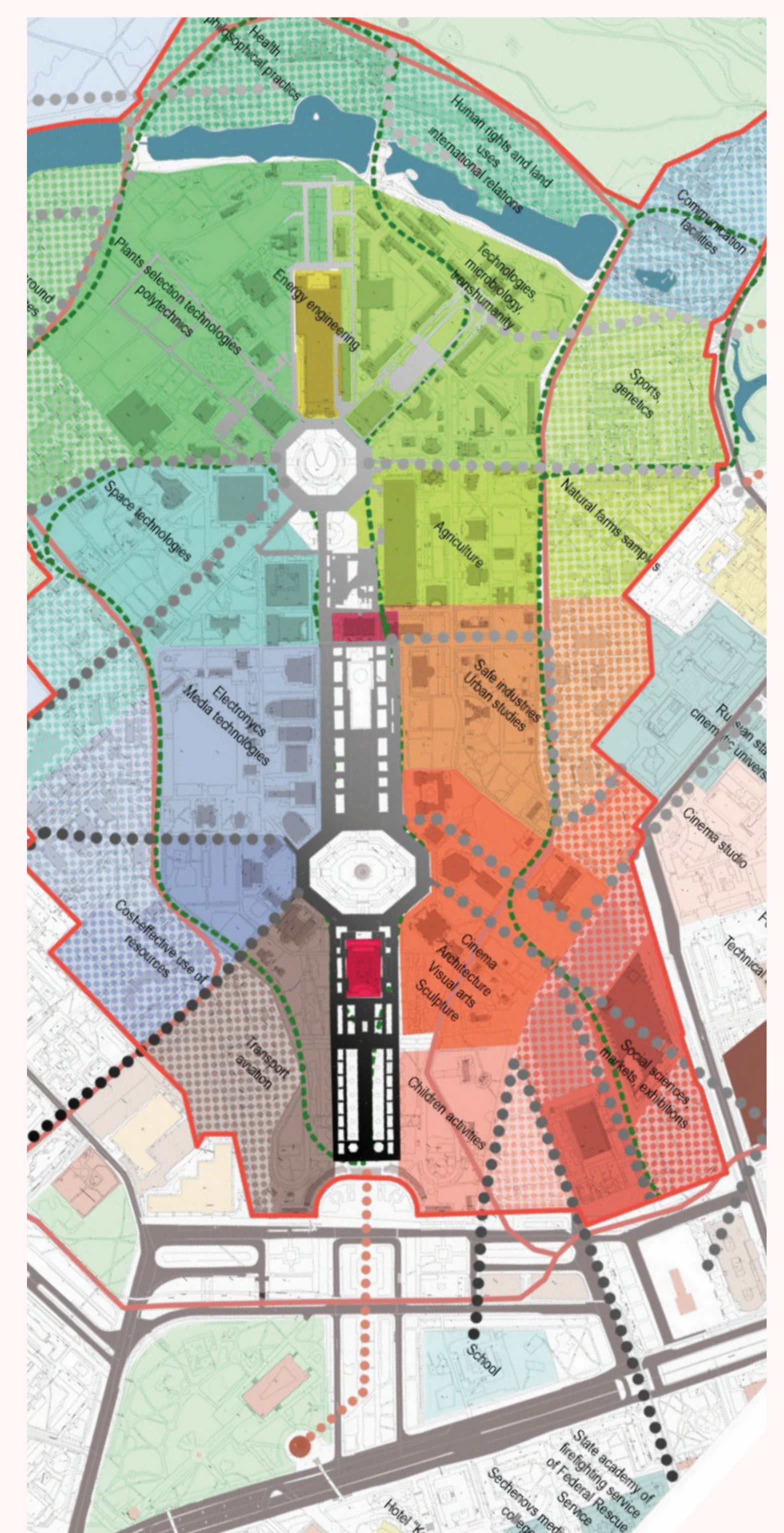
VDNH tells a story with an open end, one of adaptability. History here, is here dynamic and evolving. VDNH offers a place for the past, the old and the new past. A place that shows the history, allows learning from history, to teach history, and to respect history. Through renovation, maintenance, and education light is shed on the heritage characteristics of VDNH.

When VDNH becomes a global educational hub for heritage, history, culture and literature; preservation of heritage is turned into a chance. Reconstruction of pavilions provides a real time laboratory to test new approaches and methods on conservation of heritage. The facilities for education can be placed in buildings within VDNH through adaptive re-use, and contribute to reconstruction. Along with universities, research and development centres will be attracted to the site. Which in turn will attract other functions such as cafés, shops, and cultural activities. This mixed use development can take place through careful restoration, or adaptive re-use. In rare cases, new developments can be allowed when future purposes of the VDNH area are met. Profit on new developments needs to be partially reinvested in VDNH to restore its monuments. Another or additional strategy can be to inscribe VDNH on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This would create additional revenues, awareness, promotion, and link VDNH with other heritage sites in the world.

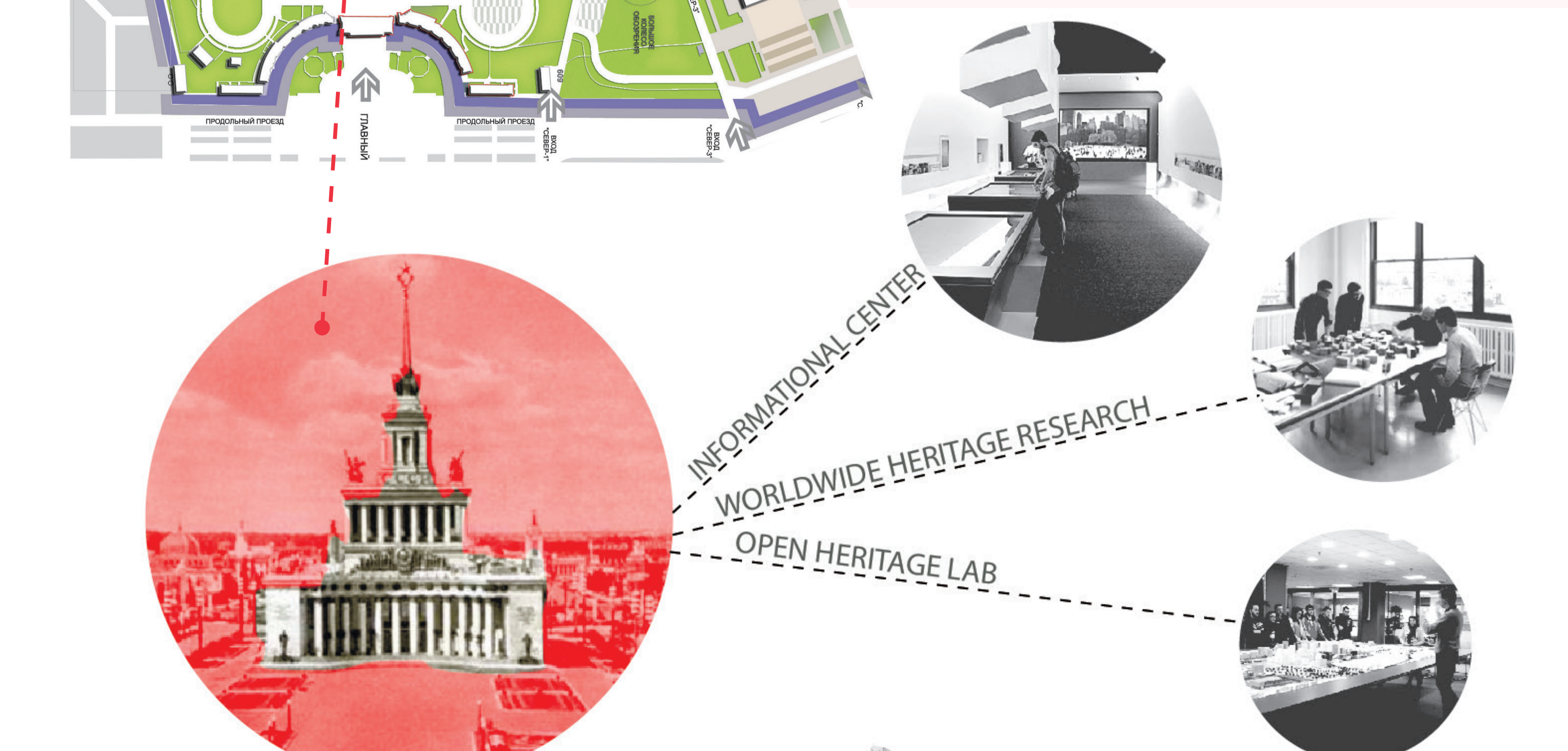
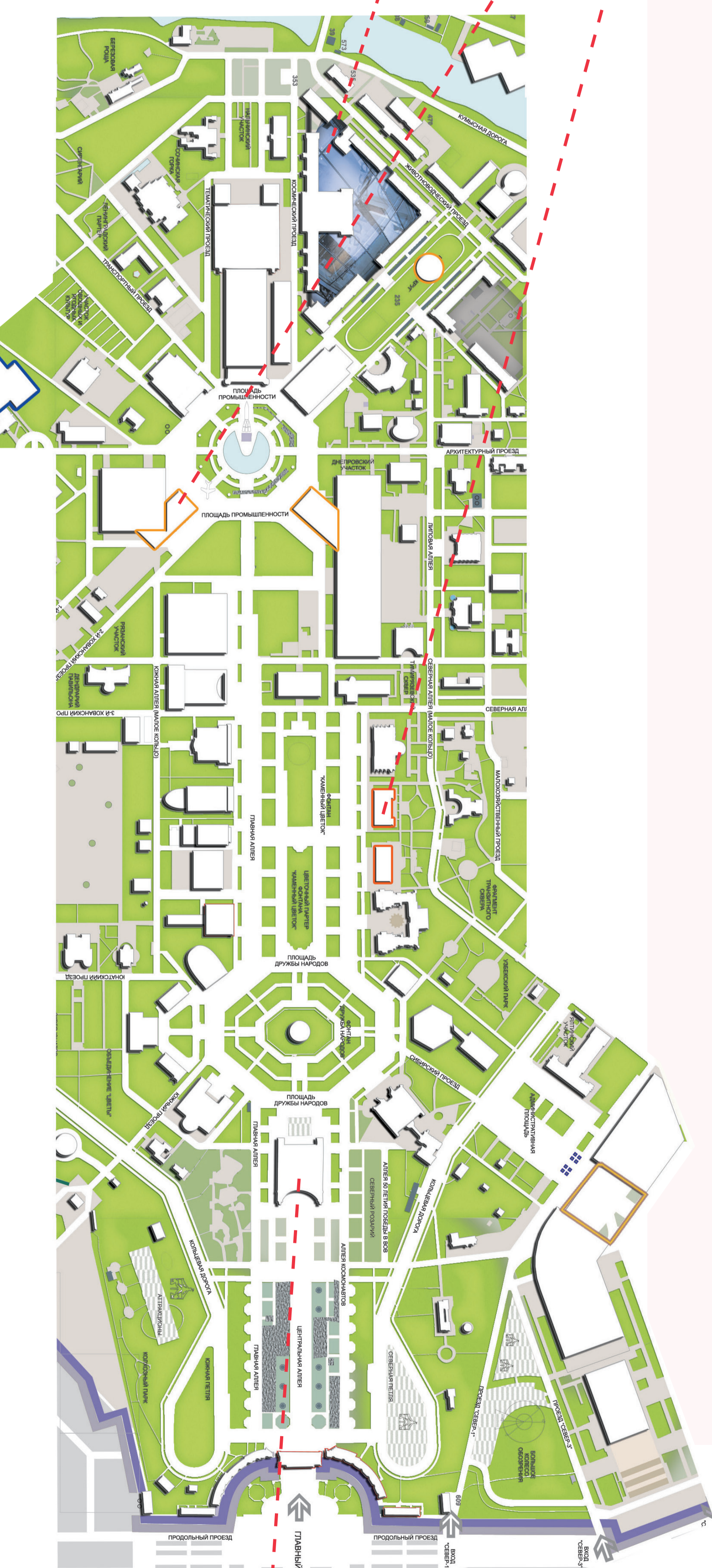


Within Moscow, VDNH will also be connected with heritage and other attractions. New routes will link these attractions, and hence attract more people from the centre to VDNH. Additional routes for cycling and walking link VDNH with other green areas. These routes offer a great possibility for green corridors and new qualitative green spaces for leisure. The functions in proximity of VDNH, such as cultural institutions, schools, health centres, laboratories, and factories, are given space to expand and represent themselves.

The time line story of VDNH is represented in the central axis. The start of the history lies at the Main Entrance and continues to the Cosmos Pavilion which acts as the point of 'Now'. From the Cosmos Pavilion, the main axis splits in three routes representing possible futures.



The Main Pavilion will house a research centre devoted to heritage, called the 'Heritage Forecast'. This research centre focuses on heritage conservation and its practice, and the forecasting of what will be the legacy of the future. The pavilion is the heart of the open research laboratory VDNH. New and old methods, studied and developed in the research centre, can be directly tested in practice in the VDNH area. Also open lectures, workshops and other activities on heritage are held to open academic and professional conduct to a wide range of people, making the pavilion an information centre for visitors.



## Scenario 2 Living Laboratory

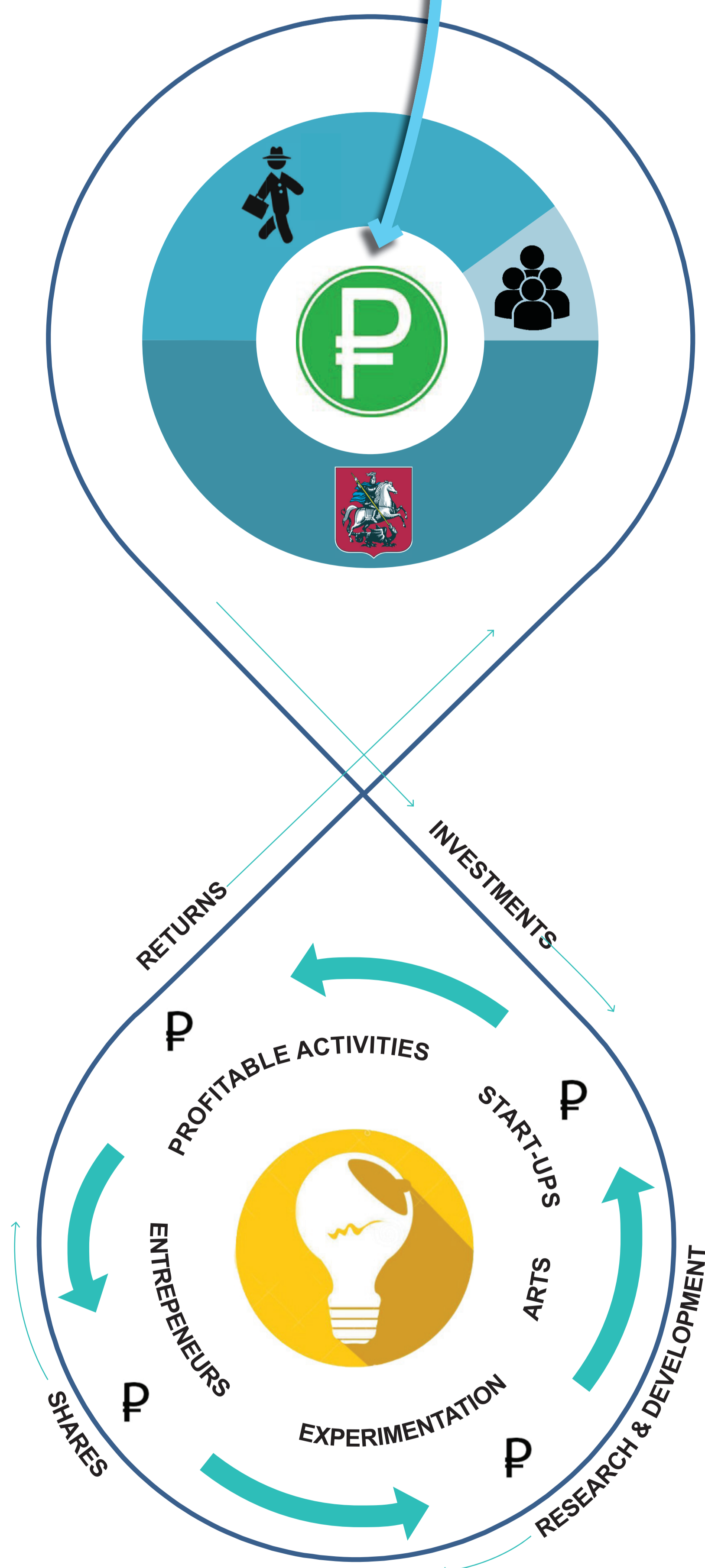
Within the Soviet Union, VDNH was used to showcase the progress of the State; from agricultural developments, to technological breakthroughs, and rocket science. In addition, it was a laboratory for experimenting with Soviet imagery, building techniques, and culture which was to be replicated elsewhere within the Union. Our vision for VDNH builds upon this tradition of experiment. We propose a living laboratory that provides a unique space for experimenting and innovation.

VDNH will exhibit the latest technologies from all over the world. VDNH is a portal for exchange of ideas and knowledge between the world and Russia. A hub within the worldwide knowledge network. VDNH is more than a showcase of new technologies. Here there is room to test, experiment, adapt, and introduce new technologies to Moscow and the rest of Russia, and vice versa to the rest of the world. The VDNH laboratory room is open for companies, but also universities and research centres as well as NGOs and public organisations. Each new high job in VDNH will create an additional five jobs within its surroundings, boosting the economy. Moscow universities will have departments in VDNH to be able to stay close to the newest development, and to work together with research centres and companies.

VDNH will be well connected with other parts of the green-blue network of Moscow. New entrances and bike lanes make the area more accessible by public transport and by foot or bicycle.

The large green areas and water ponds make VDNH a place where people not only come to work, but also to relax. Furthermore, VDNH is well connected with the cultural attributes of Moscow, and forms a place where people from different backgrounds can meet. This is also reflected in the different pavilions that have architectural influences from different cultures and eras. The monumental set up of the space and the architectural heritage make VDNH an inspirational place. A place where ideas are born, grown and exchanged.

Innovation does not stop with allowing new functions and room for experiment. It is carried through into the management and financing of VDNH. To implement the 'Living Laboratory' plan, a new management structure is created in the model of a Public Private Partnership. This Public Private Partnership consists of government, community, and the private sector. All actors carry responsibility for decision-making on the management of the park as well as for financial administration. A joint-financing strategy is pursued where funding is sourced from different sectors. A range of ventures could be supported: from start-ups, research and development, market ready ideas, to more mature business proposals. This financing model allows for investing in start-ups and research and development as it absorbs the associated risks. This would open management and financing to more actors; enabling more creative implementation and improving financial autonomy and solvency.



## Scenario 3 Tranquility in Moscow


Moscow is, with 12 million inhabitants, crowded. The built area has a high density, and there is not enough green open space to actively spend time outdoors. Moscow is busy. Time goes by very quickly with little occasion to have a rest. Most of the day, people spend at work, and using public or private transport to go to work. Yet, Moscow is chaotic. Muscovites spend on average 127 hours in traffic on top of the normal commuting time. This makes Moscow the number one congested city in Europe which as a result also a high rate of air pollution.

Muscovites need an escape from the city, within the city. VDNH is such an escape which slows down the tempo and increases the enjoyment of living in Moscow. Can the magic of VDNH help to create an oasis of tranquillity in Moscow? A place where people can escape from the chaotic city and their busy life?

Our vision is based on the idea of uncovering by discovering. Visitors will be given the chance to discover the area in their own way, and by doing so learn about other ways of living. After going through the main gate, the perception of time changes. There is no time frame. Time can go faster or at a slower pace. The VDNH area is transformed into an eclectic park with room for relaxation, edutainment, and entertainment. Whatever you do in VDNH, it will change your mindset. You learn, slow down, or look at life from another angle. Creating such a unique place on the mental map of Muscovites is not only inspiring, but even magical.


The large amount of green space helps to turn VDNH into an oasis of calm on the map of Moscow. The area is open to nature and visitors, and closed from the chaos of the city. Especially the northern part, with its connection to the botanical garden forms a place of tranquillity. Here the crowded city is far away. This northern zone offers relaxation and the feeling of being close to nature by visiting, or even living, in the ecovillage. To the south, the mix of monuments and architectural styles form a unique setting to learn more about other lifestyles, sports, and culture. Here one can learn about Russia's major achievements such as space exploration through the newest interactive technologies. The place is global-oriented while staying locally rooted. At the main avenue cultural festivities and concerts will be held, offering people a good time out. In the future VDNH will attract even more visitors. From 19 million to 28 million a year; twice more people than are currently living in Moscow. Through zoning and a good infrastructure VDNH will remain a place to relax. Within the area slow traffic is giving priority, and through an internal transport system the area is made accessible.

**CHAOTIC**




**127<sup>h</sup>**

**TRAFFIC...**




**BUSY**

**ESCAPE FROM THE BUSY CITY**

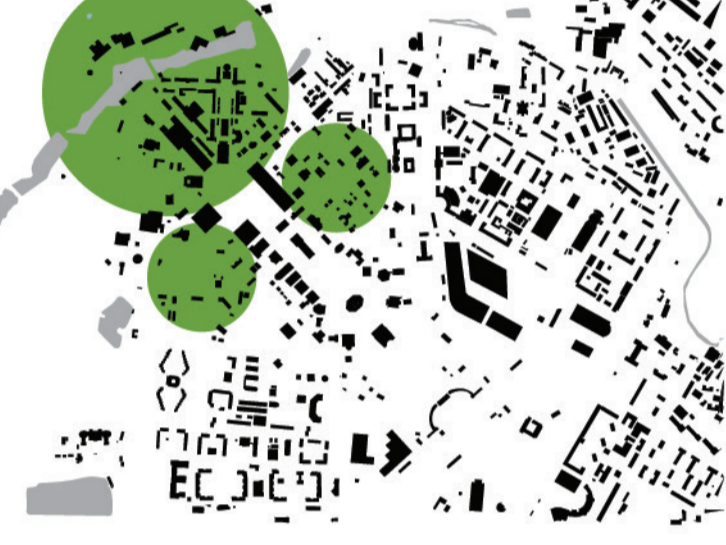


**MAGIC!?**




**[NO] TIME...**

**OTHERS WAYS OF LIVING**



**LANDSCAPE**

**50%**




**TEMPO**

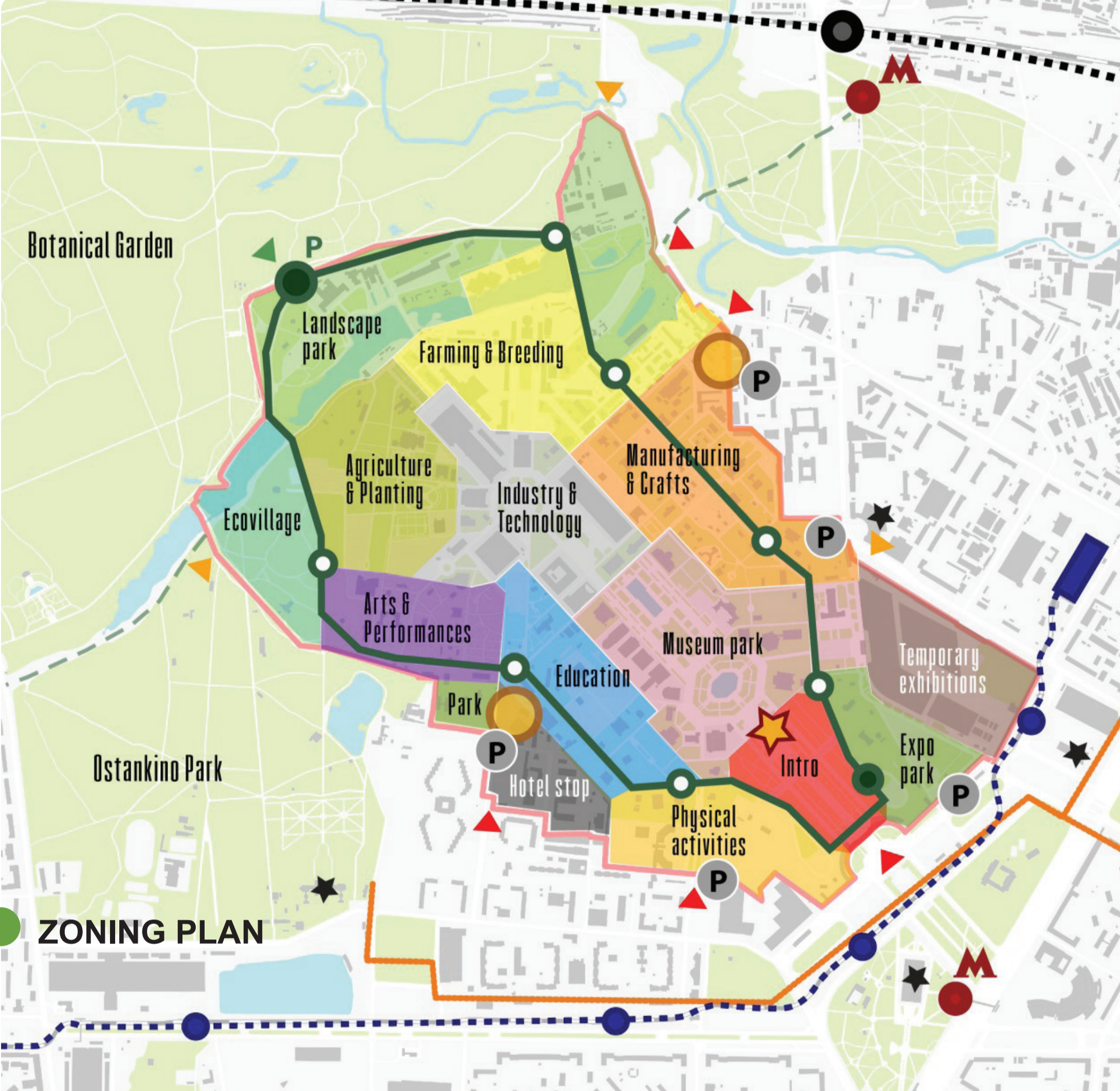
**28.000.000 VISITORS /year**

source: www.uefexpo.ru

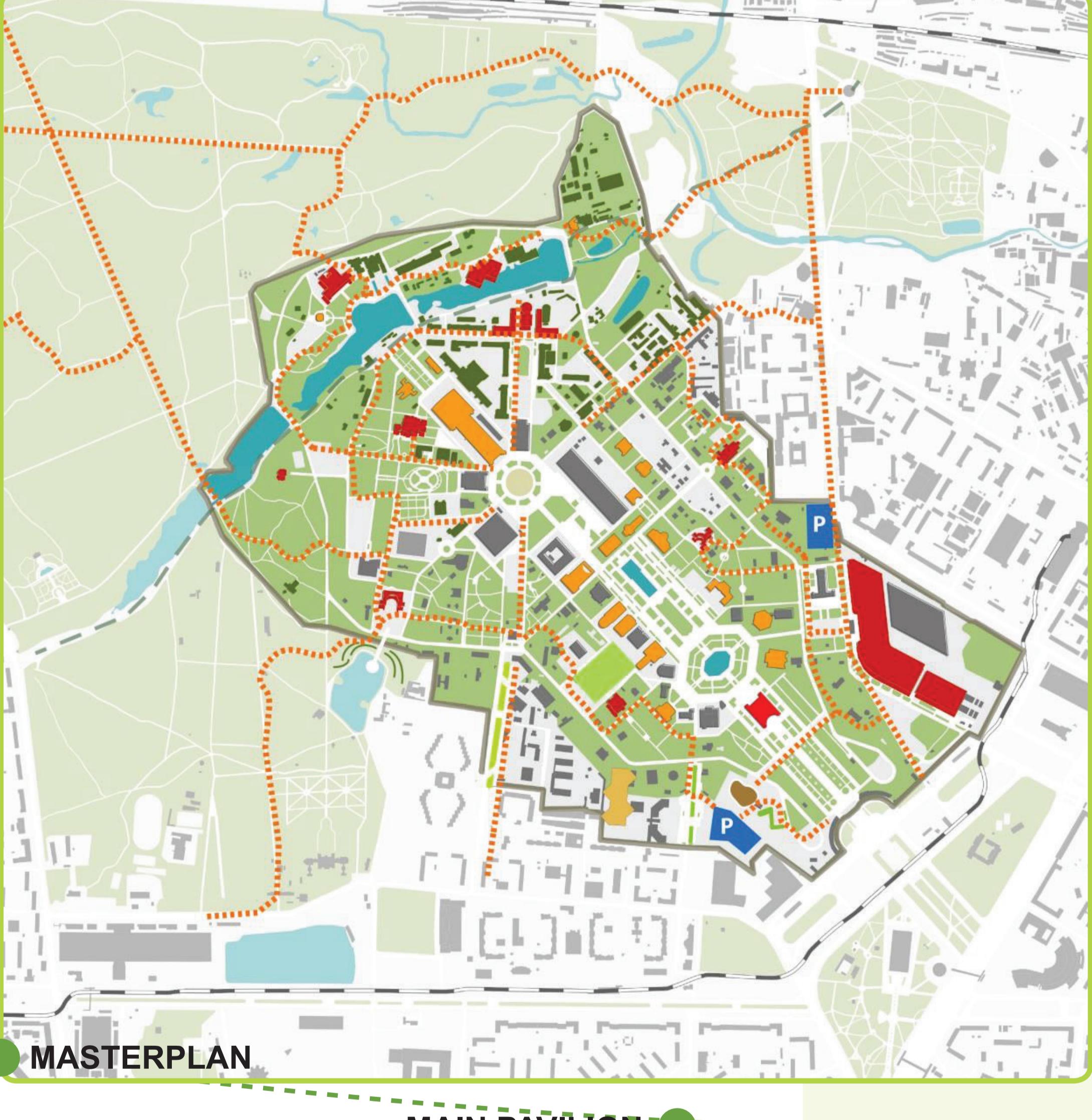
**Muscovites are entertained in VDNH**



**ZONING PLAN**



**MASTERPLAN**



**MAIN PAVILION**

