

## Яков и Партнёры

Outlook for Russia's Real Estate Development Industry: Survival Guide

November 2024

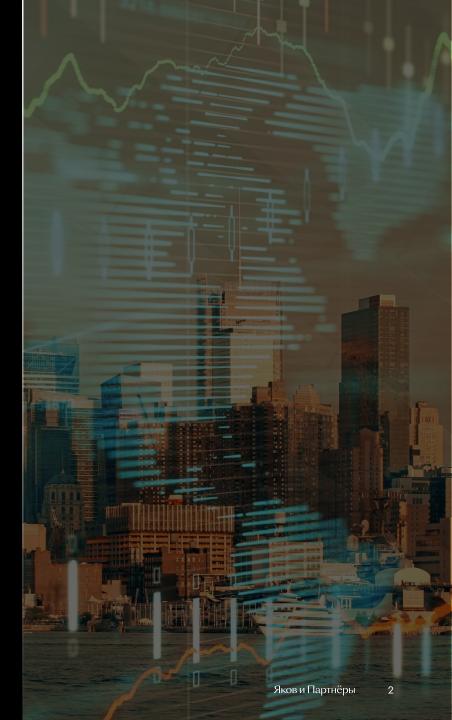
## After strong growth, developers may face slowing demand and declining margins

Government support has spurred the real estate development market growth:
in the last 3 years, new housing supply has increased by 28 mln m², and housing space per person by 8%

#### The real estate development industry has faced a number of challenges since 2022:

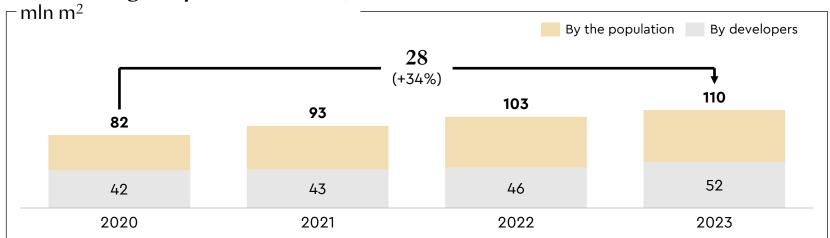
- Cost escalation: rising wages, construction materials and financing costs due to the Central Bank rate increases
- **Declining demand** driven by cuts in subsidized loan programs and mortgage rate hikes
- During similar crises in China, Japan, and the US, demand for new homes fell by 26-48% and housing prices by up to 30%
- According to our estimates, based on current trends, **new home sales may fall by 19-35% in 2025**. In the base case, this means a **decline in sales** from RUB 7.5 th in 2023 to **RUB 5.3 tn in 2025**
- Market downturn and rising construction costs could result in 30% of developers posting losses as early as 2025

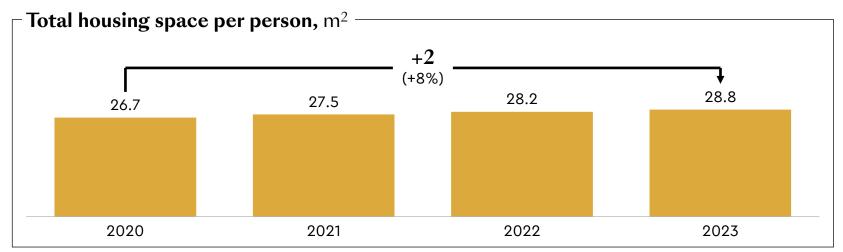
To weather the crisis, the most appropriate strategy will be to implement a set of relevant solutions for strategic diversification, operational development, and product improvement



## Government support boosted new housing completions by 34% in 2020–2023

#### New housing completions in Russia,





<sup>1.</sup> The rate from 2018 through July 2023 was at 4.25–8.50%, but there was a temporary spike to 20% between February and August 2022, at the outbreak of the special military operation

Key growth drivers for the real estate development market

#### **Government support:**

**1.6** mln loans issued under subsidized mortgage programs for more than RUB **6.1** tn from April 2020 to July 2024

**1,800** low-margin housing construction projects for **23** mln m² benefited from the program of government-supported project financing in low-income regions

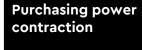
**4.25–8.5%**<sup>1</sup> was the Central Bank rate until July 2023, which fueled market growth by attracting cheap finance for housing construction and purchase<sup>1</sup>

## Costs went up in 2022 and subsidized programs and real estate demand declined in 2024

#### **Problem**

#### Causes

#### Impact on the real estate development market





**Central Bank rate increase up to 21%** in October 2024, followed by mortgage lending rate increase

**Curtailment** of government programs to **subsidize mortgage lending**:

- Termination of subsidized mortgages in July 2024. In 2023, subsidized loans worth RUB 2 tn were issued<sup>1</sup>
- Stricter requirements for IT mortgages from 2024, making it impossible to buy homes in Moscow and St. Petersburg

- **20-70% decrease in demand for new** homes in the first 2 months after subsidized mortgages were withdrawn
- Housing price growth is expected to slow down to 1-5% in the next 3-5 years. As a consequence, investment attractiveness of the housing market will decline



Construction materials price growth is outpacing housing price growth and inflation due to the rising Central Bank interest rate, rising prices of imported equipment, and logistics cost escalation (10-25% growth on average in H1 2024 alone)

Labor shortage in the industry due to:

- demographics and geopolitics
- labor migration to industries with higher wages
- stricter migration controls

To stimulate demand, interest rate subsidies by the developer and tranche lending are being introduced. The share of such loans will be 24% in 2025 and 28% in 2026

- 2-5 p.p. decrease in business margins due to cost growth outpacing the increase in housing prices
- **Decrease in business margins** due to higher labor costs and downtime associated with understaffing
- Average wage growth of 30-40% across the industry in 2023-2024
- Expected wage growth of 40-45% in the industry by 2026
- A 13% increase in construction costs per square meter by 2027 due to higher financing costs

<sup>1.</sup> For the purchase of new multi- and single-family housing Source: CBR, Rosstat, minfin.gov.ru, Yakov and Partners analysis

## Similar problems in the real estate market occurred during the crises in Japan, the US, and China between the 1990s and 2010s

Description of real estate crises



## 1990s

#### "The Lost Decade" in Japan

- From 1987 to 1990, demand for real estate grew by 51%, while prices rose by 30%
- The drivers of **long-term** growth **included:** 
  - low key rate
  - increased purchasing power due to economic growth (increased exports, industrial development, etc.)
  - buying up real estate for resale due to constant expectation of price growth
- From 1990 to 1993, demand fell by 48% as exports declined and the economy slowed



## 2000s

#### The 2008 financial crisis in the US

- From 2002 to 2006, real estate transactions increased by 18% and prices rose by 37%
- The boom in the real estate market was mainly driven by:
  - issue of low-interest mortgages to borrowers with a high risk of bankruptcy
  - issue of mortgage-backed securities and subsequent speculation on the stock market
- From 2007 to 2008, demand fell by 37% and prices dropped by 25%. Failure to pay mortgages led to foreclosures and the subsequent oversupply in the market (against the backdrop of banks getting rid of assets on their balance sheets)

## 2010s

#### China's currency crisis in 2015

- From 2008 to 2013, home sales increased by 90% – this growth was fueled by a surge in exports in the 2000s through the 2010s.
   At the same time, prices remained roughly flat
- The boom in real estate supply and demand was driven by:
  - increased purchasing power due to economic growth (increased exports, industrial development, etc.)
  - buying up real estate for resale due to constant expectation of price growth
  - urbanization of the population
- From 2013 to 2016, demand fell by 26% due to declining exports, falling real incomes, and a weaker yuan

## A sharp drop in demand plays a central role in times of crisis, as falling prices are offset by a drop in new home completions

Key indicators

Crisis period

Real estate price index

XX Inflation, %

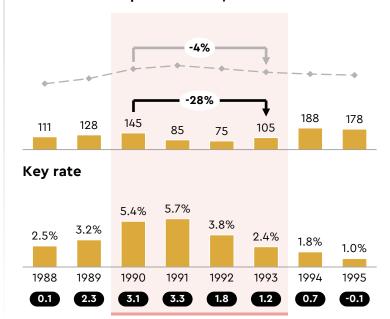


### 1990s

#### "The Lost Decade" in Japan

- Cause: a "bubble" due to low key rates, buying up properties for resale
- A 30% drop in new home completions in 1990–1993
- In the short term, a small price decline (~4%)

#### Number of completed MDUs<sup>1</sup>, `000

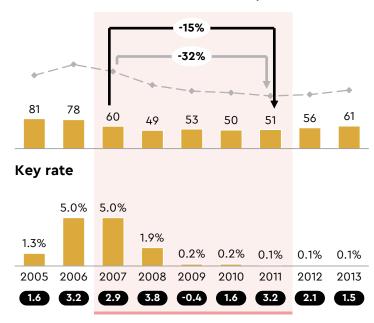


### 2000s

#### The 2008 financial crisis in the US

- **Cause:** low-interest mortgages issued to borrowers with a high risk of bankruptcy; use of mortgage-backed securities for stock market speculation
- Real estate transactions fell by 15% between 2007 and 2011
- Prices fell by ~30% from 2007 to 2011

#### Number of real estate transactions, mln



### 2010s

#### China's currency crisis in 2015

- Cause: real estate demand plunged 26% due to lower exports, falling real incomes, and a weakening yuan
- Development projects contracted by ~20% between 2013 and 2016
- No real price decline, prices reached pre-crisis levels in 2017

#### Volume of new MDU starts, tn m<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1.</sup> Multi-dwelling unit

## To support developers, governments adopted a series of economic stabilization measures to stimulate supply and demand

Measures taken



General

"The Lost Decade" in Japan

Key rate reduction from 5.4% to 2.4%

A program for **granting subsidized loans to banks** (~USD 240 bn)

A program for **restructuring developers' debts** to banks

Simplification of land use regulation

3

Additional subsidized mortgage programs to stimulate demand were not widely used



The 2008 financial crisis in the US

Key rate reduction from 5% to 0.1%

Establishment of government controls over the two largest mortgage agencies, which have a combined debt of more than USD 5 tn

Public financing for infrastructure and affordable housing construction (e.g., LIHTC program)

Mortgage loan restructuring program (as part of a ~USD 500 bn program)

**Subsidized** mortgage loan rate for low-income households

**Refinancing programs** for borrowers with a high credit load (HARP program)

Subsidized mortgage programs

The Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Act (over USD 1 tn from 2007 to 2012)



China's currency crisis in 2015

Key rate reduction from 5.7% to 4.3%

Public financing of infrastructure construction by developers (as part of the ~USD 1 tn infrastructure investment program in 2015–2016)

Reduction of the minimum provisioning requirement on mortgage loans for commercial banks

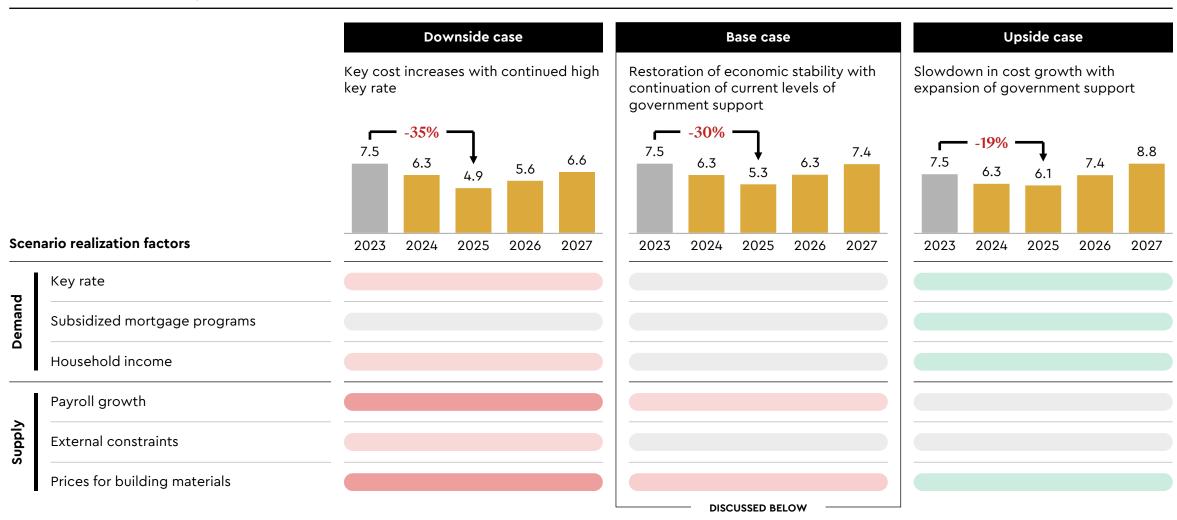
Additional subsidized mortgage programs to stimulate demand were not widely used

## Three scenarios for the development of the Russian new home market have been identified, with sales declining between 19% and 35% by 2025

Improvement

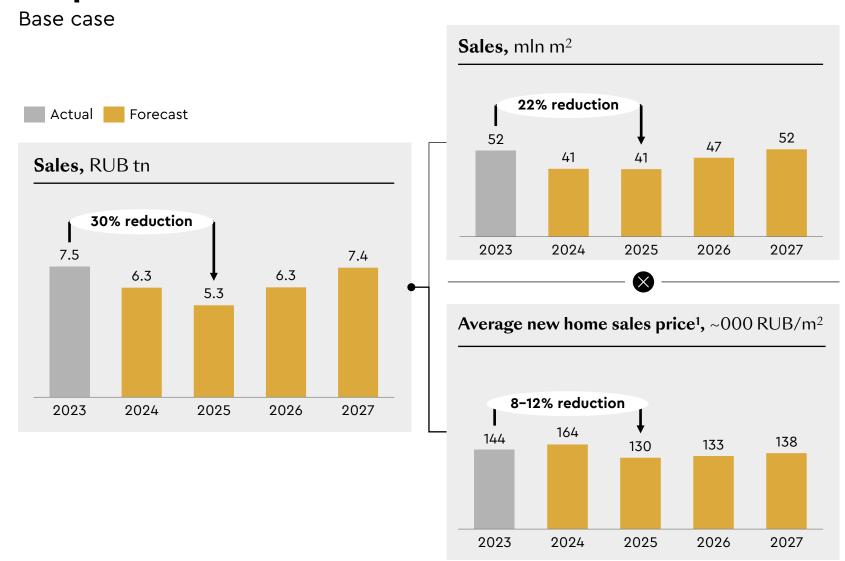
No change

New home market size, RUB tn



Deterioration

## In 2025, the new home market could see a 30% drop in sales



#### Key market drivers in 2024–2027

#### Sales volume

Decrease in demand for housing:

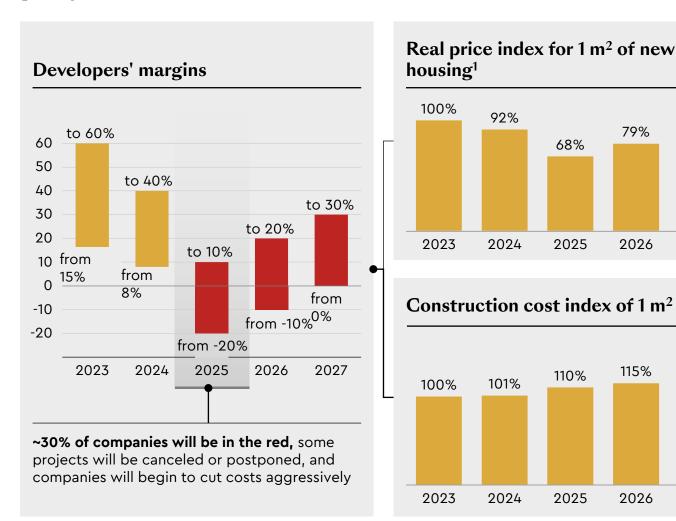
- Demand contraction with high CBR rate and loss of purchasing power, and slow recovery of demand following CBR rate reduction
- End of subsidized mortgages and stricter requirements for IT mortgages
- Reallocation of investment to commercial real estate

#### Average price

Up to 12% sales price adjustment through:

- **Discounts offered** by developers to maintain sales volume and repay project financing (5%–30%)
- Emergence of bank products to support demand (variable rate mortgages, deferred first payment, etc.)
- Continued high inflation in 2024-2025 (15%-20%), preventing a more significant decline in prices

# Rising construction costs coupled with falling real prices will lead to losses for some market players



## 1. In a high inflation environment, nominal prices will rise Source: SberCIB, CBR, Yakov and Partners analysis

#### Drivers of cost changes in 2024–2027

 More stringent migration legislation will exacerbate labor shortages and drive wages higher

91%

2027

115%

2027

- Key rate hikes will increase financing costs and reduce demand
- Construction commodity price growth will slow down from 2025 as demand declines and completions remain high

## The probability of the forecast may change due to the following factors

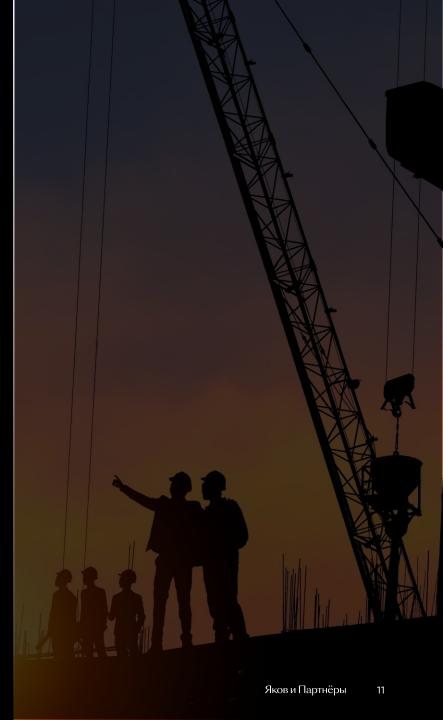
- Introduction of new government measures to support consumer demand
- Weakening of migration control or creation of programs to attract migrants
- Weakening or tightening of sanctions policy against Russia

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After strong growth, developers may face slowing demand and declining margins

To weather the crisis, the most appropriate strategy will be to implement a set of relevant solutions for strategic diversification, operational development, and product improvement

- International experience shows that **developers pursue three lines of action** to minimize the impact of crises: strategic **diversification**, **operational** development, and **product improvement**
- Depending on the company's focus and success in implementing the approaches, the potential benefit could be up to a 290% increase in EBITDA over the long term
- Progressive international developers tend to focus on four to eight tools, allowing them to grow their business even during crises
  - Analysis of the Russian market shows that:
  - Leaders already use many of the tools, but some tools are underdeveloped
  - However, the majority of players use a limited set of tools
- To mitigate the challenges, it is necessary to implement a series of measures in each of the three areas to cover the expected 30-40% reduction in margins



## There are three key lines of action that developers use to proactively navigate times of crisis



#### Geography/location

Expansion into new markets



#### Type of real estate



#### **Vertical integration**



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Expansion of the current portfolio to other property types and formats and/or other price niches

Branching out into upstream or downstream stages of the value chain or related businesses Increasing market share through acquisitions of or mergers with competitors



### Use of government subsidies

obtaining subsidies

Implementation of public

infrastructure projects and

at home or abroad



#### Operational efficiency



#### **Business model**



#### Digitalization



Financial optimization of debt burden



Operational improvement from land purchase to SoC<sup>1</sup>, including implementation of technology solutions Including models of operation without land acquisition, focus on property management, franchise models, etc. Implementation of proptech<sup>2</sup> and contech<sup>3</sup> solutions for construction management, building maintenance, financing, etc.

Improved debt-to-assets ratio



### Product efficiency improvement



Product change focused on improving margins per square meter (e.g., optimizing the apartment mix)

### Adaptation to customer oneeds

Product redesign to better meet current and future customer needs in a declining market / focus on cost reduction

#### **Additional services**



Development and implementation of additional services that will emerge as centers of gravity for acquiring customers

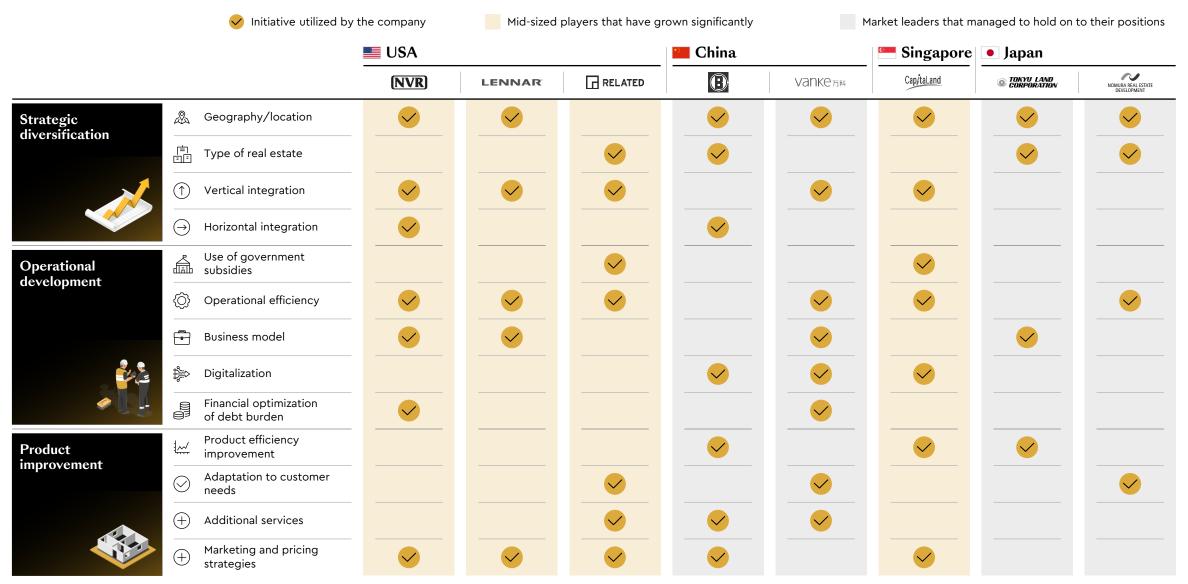
#### Marketing and pricing strategies



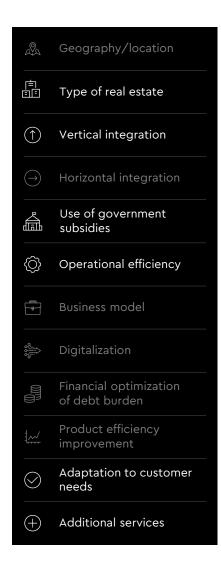
Revision of current pricing, optimization of sales strategy to match product offerings

- Statement of conformity
- 2. Property technology (technology and innovative real estate products, services, and business models)
- 3. Construction technology (technological and innovative products used in the construction process)

## By focusing on four to eight tools, leading developers were able to drive their business through the crisis periods



## A combination of diversification and operational development strategies enabled Related to grow in the face of the crisis



#### Context



#### The 2008 economic crisis

In 2006-2008:

A sharp rise in real estate prices due to a large number of cheap and risky loans issued, followed by a market collapse when interest rates rose

#### 37%



Average decrease in the number of sales transactions

#### 30%



Average decline in home values after 2007

#### **Strategies**

#### Diversified project portfolio

Multi-dwelling units, luxury real estate, commercial real estate, mixed-use

#### **Vertical integration**

- Design office
- Construction division
- MC for property management

#### Use of government subsidies

for the extension of seven metro lines and the construction of related public infrastructure

#### **Operational efficiency**

- Downsizing
- Energy savings during construction with advanced equipment

#### Adaptation to customer needs

Offering free months of rent for long-term private tenants

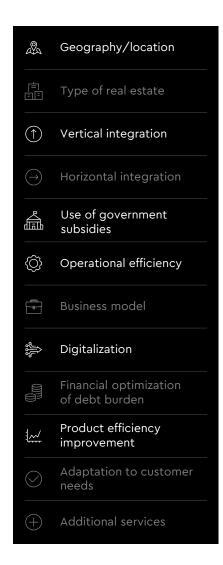
#### **Additional services**

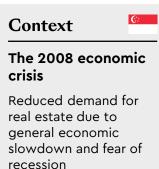
Concierge services, relocation assistance, interior design, selection of renovation contractors

- Lead developer of the largest private real estate development project in US **history** (Hudson Yards in New York City)
- Strong drive to scale the business through diversification in the 2010s
- Stable cash flows during and after the crisis due to expansion of the rental segment



## During the crisis, CapitaLand's liquidity build-up enabled it to start buying up distressed assets





20–30% decrease in sales of office, commercial, and residential real estate

#### **Strategies**

#### **Geographical diversification**

Committing USD 2.2 bn of equity to acquire and develop seven major sites in China

#### **Vertical integration**

Establishment of an autonomous site management unit

#### Use of government subsidies

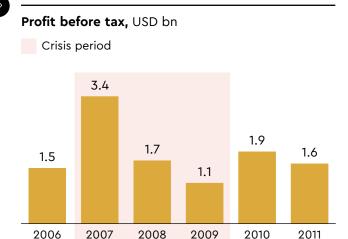
Reduced interest rates on loans for the use of energyefficient building technologies in accordance with the requirements of the Green Financing Program

#### **Operational efficiency**

- Large-scale organizational transformation with a focus on reducing payroll
- Investing in startups, including an in-house technology startup incubator

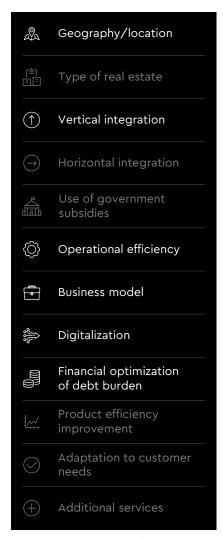
#### **Product efficiency improvement**

Energy-efficient solutions: ventilation, intelligent water management systems, etc.



- Doubling of revenues through aggressive land acquisition and dramatic expansion of footprint in China
- Focus on less distressed regions of China
- Diversifying operations, expanding into new locations, investing in technology companies (Ascendas-Singbridge, Digital Realty), etc.

## A combination of approaches enabled Vanke Group to overcome the 2013–2016 property market crisis in China



#### Context



### The 2013-2016 economic crisis

Sales in the regions almost came to a standstill, creating ghost towns. A 1.65 p.p. interest rate cut stimulated sales in only five to seven major cities

26%

Average decrease in the number of sales transactions

#### **Strategies**

#### Geography/location

Going to the US, EU, and Singapore markets

#### Vertical integration

Logistics companies (VX Logistics), long-term rental services (Vanke Property Management)

#### **Operational efficiency**

BIM, prefab and precast structures, high-strength steel and concrete, unit coordination systems

#### **Business** model

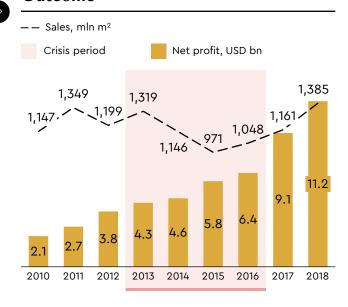
Development of the cooperation model (the developer does not acquire the land to build on)

#### Digitalization

ERP<sup>1</sup> systems, online home buying and selling services, internal communication software

#### Financial optimization of debt burden

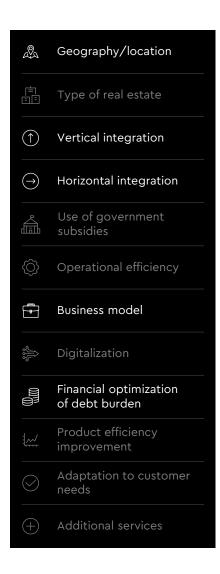
Selling a portion of the land portfolio to use the proceeds to repay debt



- Successfully weathered the crisis and dramatically increased net income in the post-crisis period
- Achieved a 20% efficiency improvement in 64% of its major projects
- Added six new cities abroad, launched a number of new businesses and digital products

<sup>1.</sup> Enterprise resource planning

## With a low debt load and a unique land business model, NVR successfully navigated the crisis



#### Context



### The 2008 economic crisis

In 2006-2008:

A sharp rise in real estate prices due to a large number of cheap and risky loans, followed by a market collapse when interest rates rose

#### 37%



%) | | |

Average decrease in the number of sales transactions

#### 30%



#### **Strategies**

#### Shifting geographic focus

Avoidance of competition in the largest regions and selection of the best projects in second-tier regions with less inflated prices

#### **Vertical integration**

Establishment of in-house manufacturing of construction/cladding materials and ventilation equipment

#### **Horizontal integration**

Post-crisis acquisition of developers (e.g., Heartland Homes) to boost growth

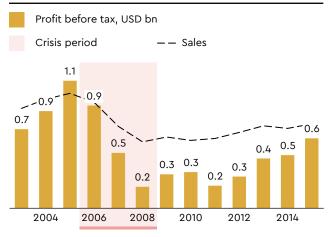
#### Improvement of the business model

- Strategy of buying land ready for development instead of preparing "raw" land
- Purchasing land through options

#### Financial optimization of debt burden

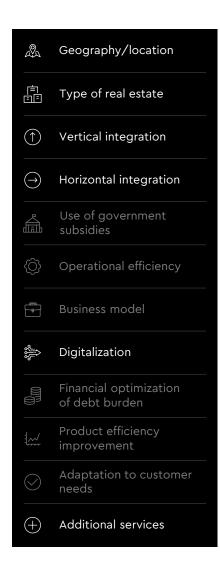
Low debt burden (in pre-crisis period, debt was ~10% of assets) with large amount of cash on hand (20–25% of capitalization)





- The only one of the top 5 US homebuilders in the 2000s to maintain positive net income throughout the crisis
- Land model helped avoid risks associated with increased costs of land preparation
- Focus on regional markets least affected by the crisis helped avoid massive price declines
- Accumulation of cash before and during the crisis allowed the company to actively pursue the acquisition of unstable developers in the 2010s

## China Overseas Land & Investment focused on strategic diversification



#### Context



### The 2013-2016 economic crisis

Interest rates fell 1.65 p.p., boosting real estate sales in major cities

26%



Average decrease in the number of sales transactions

#### **Strategies**

#### Geography/location

Expansion into new regions within China, more international projects (e.g. London)

#### **Vertical integration**

Establishment of a new supply chain management company for the building materials sector

#### Type of real estate

Development of projects that are not typical for the developer, e.g. high-end low-rise residential buildings

#### Horizontal integration

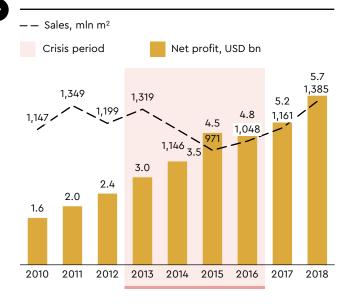
Acquisition of land with a total area of 32 mln  $\rm m^2$  from a developer on the verge of bankruptcy

#### Digitalization

Creation of a technology company for the digital management of housing construction and business operations

#### **Development of additional services**

Launch of a service for long- and short-term leasing of office space, co-working spaces, conference rooms



- The Group successfully navigated the crisis and continued to increase its net profit in 2013–2016
- Active diversification of activities, in particular by expanding into new regions and changing the type of real estate, allowed COLI to increase its share in non-core markets during the crisis
- However, borrowing was one of the main levers that allowed COLI to successfully weather the crisis

## Domestic market leaders are already developing some tools, but there is still significant room for growth in corporate efficiency

Intensity of tool use:

		intensity of tool use.		Medioiii Low
		Russian market leaders <sup>1</sup>	Typical players	Insights
Strategic diversification	Geography/location	Starting projects in foreign markets     Many companies have a broad regional footprint	Expansion into another Russian region	Market leaders tend to develop between two and eight tools. Some areas of development are not up to speed  At the same time, typical players use a limited set of tools with a lower level of maturity. Operational development is the area least addressed
	Type of real estate	Branching out into new price segments and property types	Expansion into new types of real estate	
	Vertical integration	<ul> <li>Some companies opened their own business units at different stages of the real estate development cycle, e.g. PIK (production of ceramic tiles, cladding), Samolet (real estate aggregator)</li> </ul>		
	Horizontal integration	Inorganic market share gains, e.g. by acquiring competitors		
Operational development	Use of government subsidies	<ul> <li>PPPs for infrastructure and public facilities, integrated territorial development</li> <li>Housing renewal program</li> </ul>		
	Operational efficiency	<ul> <li>Headcount optimization</li> <li>Utilization and development of automated procurement and project management systems</li> </ul>		
	Business model	• Some companies pursue fee development, franchising, commercial real estate management, or set up in-house contractors		
	<b>ॢ</b> Digitalization	<ul> <li>Launch of a real estate software development company</li> <li>Application of BIM<sup>2</sup> technologies</li> <li>Implementation of construction process automation platforms</li> <li>Launch of an automated contractor engagement system</li> </ul>	Implementation of construction process automation platforms	
	Financial optimization of debt burden	<ul> <li>CEIFs: RUB 490 bn worth of Russian assets</li> <li>Partnerships with investment funds</li> </ul>	Sale of additional services	
Product improvement	Product efficiency improvement	Smart apartment layouts		
	Adaptation to customer needs	<ul> <li>Super apps with access to the neighborhood ecosystem</li> <li>Smart home systems, automated resource accounting, digital access</li> <li>Customer traffic map for B2B</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Furnished apartments</li><li>Mortgages with a fully digital transaction cycle</li></ul>	
	+ Additional services	<ul> <li>Live streaming of construction sites</li> <li>Service for the sale of furniture, appliances and home accessories</li> <li>B2B and B2C services marketplace</li> <li>B2B services for investment, leasing and business promotion</li> </ul>	B2C services	
	Marketing and pricing strategies	<ul><li>Flexible pricing</li><li>Ongoing review of sales strategy</li></ul>	Flexible pricing	

Leaders in terms of volume of housing under construction

Source: Yakov and Partners analysis

Medium Low

Building information modelling

## Developing an optimal crisis management strategy requires the right combination of tools in three areas



#### Geography/location

- Regions with strong government support: the Arctic, the Far East, etc.
- Markets of the CIS, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, including through M&As

#### Type of real estate

- New price niche
- Recreational facilities, serviced apartments, hotels
- Single family homes
- Industrial properties, including light industrial and warehouses
- Data centers

### Vertical integration

- Building materials and furniture manufacturing
- Design
- Construction
- Real estate agency

#### Horizontal integration

Hiah

- Acquisition of players with
  - strong expertise
  - market complementarity
  - good land bank
- financial difficulties



### Use of government subsidies

- PPPs for infrastructure and public facilities
- Integrated territorial development
- Housing renewal program

### Operational efficiency

- Project management system
- Category-based sourcing strategy
- Process acceleration and mechanization
- Motivation: multi-layered KPI system

#### **Business model**

Intensity of tool use by RF market leaders1:

- Fee-development
- Real estate developer franchise
- Property management
- Use of space for advertising

#### Digitalization

- Automation of contractor management
- Advanced construction monitoring
- Dynamic pricing
- BIM<sup>2</sup> in design

### Financial optimization of debt burden

JVs with other players and investors

Low

CEIFs for commercial real estate



#### Product efficiency improvement w

- Optimization of planning solutions
- Optimization of structural solutions
- Modularization

#### Adaptation to customer needs $\bigcirc$

- Al-enabled security systems
- Furnishings, finishes, product upgrades (soundproofing, in-floor heating, electric charging stations, etc.)
- Flexible commercial spaces

#### Additional services

- App for services within housing estate infrastructure
- Rental service
- Concierge service
- · Cleaning services
- · Leisure activities
- Pet and plant care

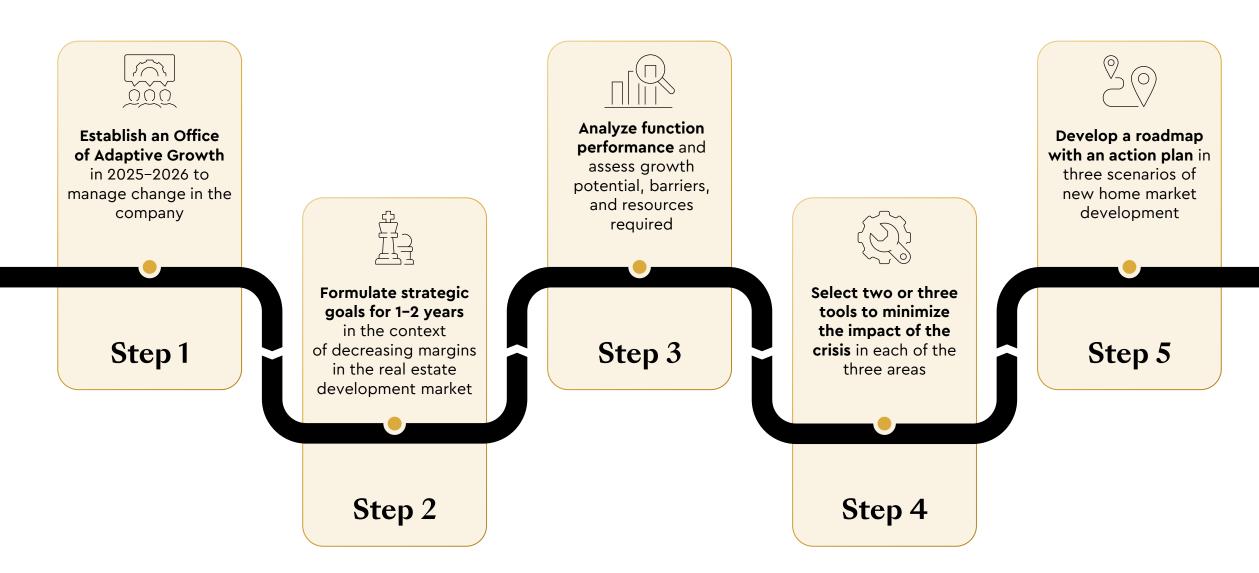
#### Marketing and pricing strategies %

- Subsidized mortgage
- Tranche mortgage
- Installment scheme
- Mortgage with rate choice
- Down payment with rental payments

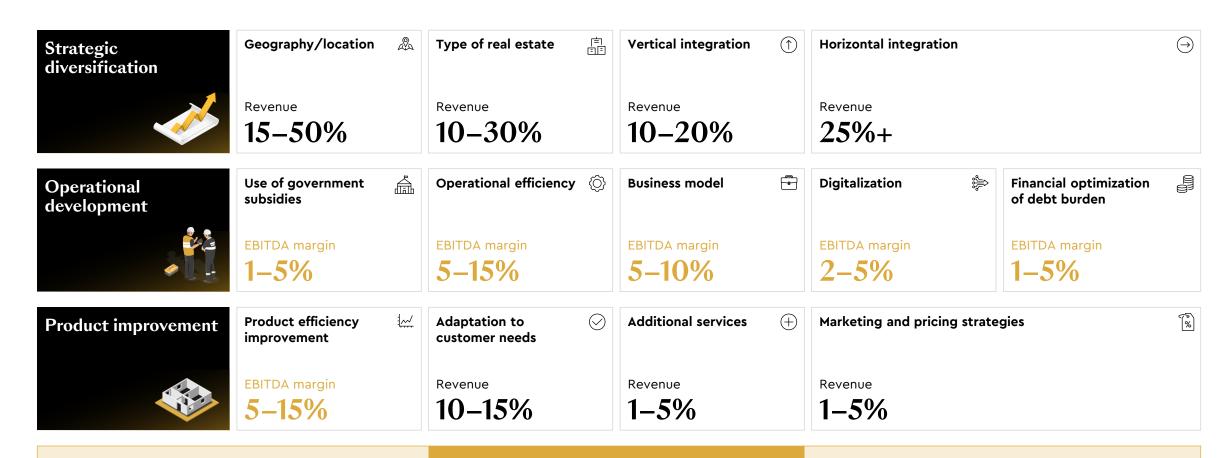
- 1. Leaders in terms of volume of housing under construction
- 2. Building information modelling

Source: Yakov and Partners analysis Яков и Партнёры

## To maximize the impact of the workstreams, we recommend following a simple five-step flowchart



## The total long-term potential benefit of the initiatives could be a EBITDA uplift of up to 290%



Up to 150% of revenue growth

Up to 290% of EBITDA growth

Up to 55% of EBITDA margin growth

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Source: Yakov and Partners analysis Яков и Партнёры

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#### Outlook for Russia's Real Estate Development Industry: Survival Guide

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