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Figure 7.2 President Juscelino Kubitschek.

professor Donald Belcher was hired to pinpoint a suitable site. The firm recommended one based on its topography, soil qualities, rainfall and winds. It has porous soil and summer rainfall, and is located at an altitude of a little over 1000 metres with a relative humidity varying between 55% and 86% over the course of the year. In 1956, with the site selected, Congress authorized the formation of a company NOVACAP (Nova Capital) to proceed with the development of Brasília. Its only shareholder was the Brazilian Government. The whole process of development was pushed ahead by President (1956–61) Juscelino Kubitschek (see Figure 7.2) and some see the city as a monument to him.

In September 1956, NOVACAP announced a competition for the general plan of Brasília. The requirement was that the entries: (1) show the proposed structure of the city, the location of its precincts, centres and lines

of communication at a scale of 1:25,000 and (2) provide a supporting report. The competition was open to all Brazilian architects, planners and urbanists. A considerable body of data was assembled to assist the entrants. The winning entry was to be selected by an international jury (including Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer). From 26 entries it selected the scheme (see Figures 2.3 and 7.3a) by Lucio Costa, a consultant town planner, over those by Gonçalves, Millman and Rocha, MMM Roberto (see Figure 7.3c) and Rino Levi (see Figure 7.3b). Costa's selection was controversial because he failed to meet the criteria established by NOVACAP. He, nevertheless, had an idea that captivated the jury and, it seems, President Kubitschek. Oscar Niemeyer became the principal architect.

Costa presented a series of sketches on five cards. His plan was chosen because it was a 'noble diagram' supported by a