

Government to Spend \$9Bln on Rural Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev unveiled plans to channel 300 billion rubles (\$9 billion) by 2020 into rural Russia to trigger economic and social development.

"There are 37 million people living in the Russian countryside. Our joint task is to create respectable living conditions for them," Medvedev said at a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday at which the new federal target program was approved, Itar Tass reported.

The program will build comfortable housing and social infrastructure and will also include grants for local initiatives, preserve natural landscapes and revive local cultural traditions and folk crafts. The program plans to support 775 such projects, RIA Novosti reported.

Ninety billion rubles will come from the federal budget, while regional budgets will have to provide a further 150 billion rubles. Sixty billion rubles will come from private funds, Medvedev said.

Territories that have ongoing high-tech agricultural investment projects will be prioritized under the new program, the prime minister said, adding that 5.4 million square meters of housing would be built for 42,000 young families and professionals intending to move to the country.

Almost half of the overall funding for the program, 142 billion rubles, will be spent directly on building houses and another 33 billion — on land clearance and utility lines prior to residential construction, Agriculture Minister Nikolai Fyodorov told Itar Tass.

The program replaces a previous 275 billion ruble initiative to improve living conditions in rural areas that was started in 2003 and ends this year.

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