

Beijing shantytowns finish renovation ahead of schedule

Beijing has surpassed its annual target number of homes, investment and people involved in shantytowns renovation as of the end of September, benefiting up to 235,000 people.

Shantytowns are impoverished communities where people densely inhabit single-story houses that have been used for many years. The places are poor in housing quality, infrastructure facilities, transportation, security and environment.

Shantytown renovation is a major project to improve the livelihood of their inhabitants launched by the Chinese government. The project aims to rebuild dilapidated housing in cities and towns and to improve housing conditions for needy families. According to the plan, Beijing this year will renovate 36,000 homes in rundown urban areas in 16 districts, including the largest shantytown in Fengtai District covering 1,440 hectares.

According to the Beijing Major Projects Construction Headquarters Office, the city renovated a total of 40,718 homes in shantytowns from January to September, surpassing the annual target number of 36,000. In the same period, total investment on the project hit 80.8 billion yuan (US\$12.27 billion), surpassing the annual target of 75 billion yuan, and more than doubling the amount over the same period last year.

Eleven districts including Dongcheng, Chaoyang and Fengtai districts have fulfilled the annual task ahead of schedule. Xicheng District and Haidian District have completed 90 percent of their task, while the districts of Tongzhou, Daxing and Huairou have begun relocation effort for shantytown inhabitants.

The head of the major projects office said the city will focus next on the districts that have not yet completed the annual task of renovation, and intensify and step up efforts to fulfill the annual task in an all-round way by the end of October.