

Twenty-eight counties lifted out of poverty

Twenty-six poor counties have got rid of the poverty label following the removal of Jinggangshan, East China's Jiangxi province, and Lankao, Central China's Henan province, from the poverty list in February.

"Strict procedures and standards shall be followed when removing poverty-stricken areas from the list," said Xia Gengsheng, member of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development.

Four targets have to be met to be removed from the list. First, people living in poverty should be less than 2 percent of the total population if the area is in the central region, and less than 3 percent if they are living in the western region. Second, people mischaracterized as non-poor population should be less than 2 percent of the total population. Third, the percentage of people who have been left out of the survey must be under 2 percent. Fourth, over 90 percent residents should agree that their place has been lifted out of poverty. All the 26 counties meet the targets.

Over 760 people from seven institutions including Renmin University were entrusted to conduct a field review and assessment on these counties one by one in July and August. Over 20,000 households in total were included, or around 1,000 households per county. The whole process was supervised by 65 experts from the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Southwest University, serving as a third-party assessing institution, reviewed and assessed Nanbu county, southwestern Sichuan province. "We used remote sensing, compared satellite imagery of the place from 2014 to 2016 and its geographical features," said Liao Heping, the university's professor. "We focused on the relatively poor area with weak infrastructure."

Thorough assessments were carried out in all the counties, including remote areas. Low-income families, people with severe diseases, and those with bad housing were all included in sampling.

Great importance was paid to people living apart from their families, people living in remote areas, immigrants, and families with no labor force. The opinions of a wide range of people were consulted during the process. Over 1,400 questionnaires were handed out to cadres in villages and around 1,000 to cadres in counties.

"We will continue to consolidate what we have achieved and make sure people who have just been lifted out poverty do not return to poverty again. Besides, we will strength poverty alleviation and help the rest shake off poverty," said Zhang Gensheng, county Party secretary of Nanbu county.

"After they remove the title of impoverished county, we will continue to

strictly examine and assess those counties,” said Yang Lian, deputy director of the poverty alleviation group’s evaluation division.

China plans to lift another 100 counties out of poverty this year.