

Medvedev Offers \$3Bln a Year for Far East Development

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has offered 100 billion rubles (\$3 billion) annually in federal funding for infrastructure projects in the Far East and Baikal region over the next five years.

The extra funding extends the "Economic and Social Development of the Far East and Baikal Region Until 2013" federal program until 2018 and identifies specific infrastructure development projects, Interfax reported Tuesday.

The [aim](#) of the program, adopted in 1996, is to create the socio-economic conditions necessary to turn the area into a competitive market with a diversified economy.

Under the new proposal, the program will include priority projects in the development of transportation and energy infrastructure, increasing the output of Trans-Siberian and Baikal-Amur railways, and developing regional aviation, airports, roads and ports.

A bridge connecting the island of Sakhalin with the mainland is also under consideration.

Government ministries responsible for the region's development were asked to consider the new projects and provide feedback by July 1.

"This is the start of a new and important stage in our development; the new federal targeted program will be filled with specific identifiable projects," said Far East Development Minister Viktor Ishayev.

"It has been decided that under this program the Far East will receive 100 billion to 110 billion rubles in federal funding annually. We already have a proposal. But the structure of the program will change. We have to use a new format and select projects that can actually be done, projects that we can start working on from 2014," Ishayev said in comments carried by Interfax.

The original Far East development program was approved by the federal government with 11 federal ministries responsible for the development of infrastructure projects and a favorable investment climate in the region, taking into account its geo-strategic position and national security interests.

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