

SKorea to plant trees in China to reduce 'yellow dust'

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Skyscrapers in downtown Seoul in 2006 are shrouded by yellow dust storms blowing in from China's Gobi desert. The Seoul city government will help fund a tree-planting project in a Chinese desert to reduce the amount of harmful "yellow dust" blowing over South Korea, officials said Wednesday.

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The city government signed an accord Tuesday to invest 50 million won (42,000 dollars) in the planting project led by Future Forest, a South Korean environmental group operating in [China](#) for the past 10 years.

The investment will be used to purchase and plant some 72,000 poplar and [desert](#) willow trees in Inner Mongolia's Kubuqi Desert, 600

kilometres (370 miles) west of Beijing.

"Yellow dust" -- fine sand blown from China and Mongolia which sometimes includes toxic chemical smog emitted by Chinese factories -- can cause respiratory disorders.

"We who suffer from yellow dust hope it will contribute to solving the problem and improving the South Korea-Chinese friendly relationship," a Seoul city official handling the project told AFP.

He said the Kubuqi Desert, the world's seventh largest, is blamed for causing 40 percent of "yellow dust" that blankets the Korean peninsula every spring.

Future Forest, in partnership with the All China Youth Federation, has created wooded areas in Chinese arid areas to help alleviate the problem.

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