January to June 2022
Campaign Actions
and Events in Asia
Climate campaigners celebrate Tiger Lunar New Year in the Philippines calling for a total exit from coal and the rapid development of renewable energy systems in Asia

Climate campaigners wearing colorful tiger masks held a flash mob at the Fil-Chinese Friendship Arch in Binondo Manila to celebrate the Tiger Lunar New Year as the year of action for total coal phase out and rapid development of renewable energy systems in the Philippines and the rest of Asia. They called on Chinese institutions and banks to immediately stop financing and investing in overseas coal projects in line with the announcement of President Xi Jinping last September 2021. They also urged the Chinese government to stop all subsidies for fossil fuels and strongly support the building of renewable energy systems in Asia.

Similar actions were also held in other Asian capitals. (add here among among locations)

On September 21, 2021, President Xi Jinping told the United Nations General Assembly that “China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy, and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad.” During the 30th Asean-China dialogue held in November 2021 these declarations were reiterated.

China is one of the highest contributors to public finance of coal overseas. In Asia, Chinese banks and corporations have financed coal expansion projects in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.
Climate campaigners celebrate Tiger Lunar New Year in the Philippines calling for a total exit from coal...
Southeast Asian organizations urge ASEAN to massively scale up climate adaptation actions in the region

Southeast Asian civil society organizations and movements called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to establish a formal mechanism to address adaptation to climate change and loss and damage associated with climate change impacts. The call was made during an international conference organized by ActionAid Vietnam and Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD). More than 40 organizations from across Asia participated in the virtual Southeast Asian Conference on Climate Change Impacts and Actions, which issued dire warnings on the impacts of climate change on food and agriculture in the region.

“We call on the ASEAN and Southeast Asian governments to scale up appropriate and timely responses to climate change impacts, both current and projected, specifically to empower and enable our countries, peoples and communities to build resilience and deal with loss and damage caused by climate change,” said Lidy Nacpil, coordinator of APMDD.

Hoang Phuong Thao, executive director of ActionAid Vietnam, said a Southeast Asian civil society report and recommendations to the ASEAN on the impacts of climate change will be issued and will focus on the impacts of climate change on food and agriculture in Southeast Asia.

“Climate change is undermining Southeast Asian people and communities’ ability to produce and access food in the future. We plan to engage the ASEAN to establish a formal mechanism to address adaptation to climate change and loss and damage associated with climate change impacts. We will engage governments as well to address agriculture livelihoods resilience in the face of climate change,” said Hoang.

A study on the impacts of droughts and floods on croplands and crop production in Southeast Asia found that droughts and floods affected 13.1 M ha of croplands in the region and about 20.6 M tons of crop production...
was lost between 2015 and 2019. Numerous studies in the region have suggested that both inland and marine fishery production have started declining because of climate variation and climate-induced disasters. The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released in August predicts that Southeast Asia will be hit by rising sea levels, heat waves, and drought.

“The ASEAN could and should play a crucial role in the development and scaling up of effective responses to climate change impacts and the imperatives of building resilience and empowering peoples and communities of Southeast Asia,” said Wanun Permpibul, director of Climate Watch Thailand.

“We would like the ASEAN and its member states to call for immediate and significant increase in the overall levels of climate finance pledges by developed countries, beyond the $100 billion a year. This $100 billion goal is only a fraction of what is actually needed to address adaptation and loss and damage,” said Titi Soentoro, executive director of Aksi! for gender, social and ecological justice in Indonesia.

The effects of climate change which cannot be avoided or adapted to are predicted to cost US$1.2 trillion per year by 2060. Soentoro said this must be considered separately from adaptation and institutional mechanisms and must prioritize the most vulnerable people. Climate finance must be delivered as public funds, not as private investments that expect returns, and not in the form of loans and other debt creating instruments, she added.
January 30, 2022

Climate and community groups from Asia, Africa call on China to stop planned oil and gas supply deal with Russia

More than 100 climate campaign groups and community organizations from Asia and Africa called on the Chinese government and its financial institutions and state-owned enterprises to stop its planned oil and gas supply deals with Russia amid the rapid exodus of foreign investors from Russia. China is considering buying stakes in Russian energy companies and assets, such as gas giant Gazprom PJSC.

In an open letter sent to various Chinese embassies and institutions, the signatories said they “stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people currently suffering from the impacts of a fossil fuel enabled war and ask that China do not undertake any investments which will strengthen Russia's side in a war of aggression against another sovereign country and may further fuel catastrophic climate change.”

The signatories expressed opposition to China’s support for Russia despite the growing call on governments and public and private financial institutions to stop importing and investing in Russian oil, gas and coal.

Russia’s economy is largely funded on fossil fuel exports, with 40% of Russia’s federal budget coming from oil and gas exports.

“Thus, we urgently and specifically call on China to go further than calling for “maximum restraint” and urge Chinese enterprises and financial institutions not to invest in Russian fossil fuel assets and projects. They will not only bear economic loss, but also have their reputations tarnished permanently,” the letter stated.
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The World Bank stopped financing coal-fired power plants in 2010 and upstream oil and gas after 2019. However, it supports natural gas projects “in specific cases” and as a medium-term solution.

The World Bank Group continues to support fossil fuel projects even after the signing of the Paris Agreement, at least US$ 20.6 billion in oil and gas projects from 2016 to 2021. It is eyeing to support a planned US$ 379 billion expansion of gas infrastructure projects in Asia as an alternative to coal and oil.

On the occasion of the 2022 IMF-WB Spring meetings, climate campaigners called on the World Bank to cancel outstanding debts arising from harmful projects, such as fossil fuels. They said staggering debt burdens continue to plague most developing countries and the impacts of these burdens are far worse during this time of the multiple crises of Covid, climate, and economic hardships. They also called on the bank to go beyond fossil fuel financing restrictions and explicitly end all forms of support for all coal, gas and oil projects, and to pay reparations for the harmful impacts of fossil fuel projects it supported in developing countries. These projects have trapped countries into costly fossil-fuel based energy systems, as well as destroyed livelihoods, displaced people and communities, and harmed public health.

The resident of Atimonan, Quezon raises a placard in protest of how the International Finance Corporation (IFC)-funded Atimonan One Energy coal power station has polluted Lamon Bay, a rich fishing ground and home to various living corals. The bay links the southern part of Quezon province to the Philippine Sea.

PHOTO: PHILIPPINE MOVEMENT FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE
The World Bank is responsible for the acceleration of natural gas deployment in Indonesia, as well as the development of fossil gas and LNG infrastructure in Bangladesh and gas and LNG energy in Pakistan. Its Technical Assistance to the Philippines paved the way for a number of proposed LNG projects in the country. In 2021 alone, the country’s energy department has issued clearance to 10 gas projects with a total of 13 GW capacity.

The internal watchdog of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank Group’s private lending arm, recently called on the IFC to provide remedy for the “significant adverse social, environmental and climate impacts of its investments, and to reform its financial intermediary lending practices to prevent future harm.”

An investigation by the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO) of the IFC found it had violated its own environmental and social protection policies by helping to bankroll coal projects in the Philippines through a local bank. CAO concluded that the coal plants generate significant GHG emissions and that the local bank failed to comply with IFC requirements to adequately consider and adopt technology and other measures to reduce plant contributions to climate change. This was raised in a landmark complaint filed in 2017 against the IFC by the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ).
Coordinated biking events in 9 Asian countries call for bold action on climate change

The biking events called Pedal for People and Planet were held in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

Thousands of bikers joined climate activists in coordinated biking events held in nine Asian countries calling on governments and corporations to step up climate action to save the planet from climate catastrophe.

In the Philippines, the bike actions were held in Metro Manila, Camarines Norte, Davao City and Batangas. In Thailand, participants cycled in Bang Ra Kham district, an area hit by extreme flooding and droughts and the site of the first of the 13 canals funded under the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to improve the country’s climate adaptation. In Japan, the bike action was part of the Japanese protest action against the Yokosuka Coal Power Plant in Kanagawa.

In Bangladesh, rickshaw drivers cycled along the coastal areas of Khulna. In Delhi and Kolkata in India, the event featured not just bikes, but also vending carts with wheels. In Nepal, bikers cycled 10 kilometers from the Heritage Site to the city area in Kathmandu, while bikers cycled along the main roads of Lahore in Pakistan.
APMDD member Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (PKRC) led the #PedalForPeopleAndPlanet bike action in Lahore, which started from PCSIR colony and ended at Punjab university campus bridge on main canal road.

“We call for a rapid, just and equitable phaseout of fossil fuels and transition to clean energy. We need to be fossil fuel-free before 2050. At the current pace, the world will exceed 3°C of global warming by 2030. This will cause massive deaths and damage to communities, livelihoods, food systems, habitats, and economies.

Science tells us, however, that limiting the rise in global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, the safest temperature limit still possible, is not beyond reach. But we need systemic changes, not hollow pledges for net zero that allow for business as usual to continue,” said Lidy Nacpil, APMDD coordinator.
Coordinated biking events in 9 Asian countries call for bold action on climate change
“We call for actions that deliver climate justice to countries that are much more vulnerable to climate change and communities that are least able to prepare for, and recover from climate change impacts. We likewise reject false solutions, such as technologies that claim to neutralize the impacts of fossil fuels, as well as market mechanisms that do not deliver what is required to limit global warming and speed up the transition to 100 percent renewable sources,” said Ian Rivera, Philippine Movement for Climate Justice.

“Developing countries have contributed the least to global warming with less than four percent of global carbon emissions. There is a huge climate debt owed to developing countries by developed countries for the damage caused by their disproportionately large contributions to climate change,” said Sreedhar Ramamurthi of Environics Trust India.

Wanun Permpibul of ClimateWatch Thailand added: “We call for reparations in the form of significant increase in the overall levels of climate finance pledges by developed countries, beyond the $100 billion a year, as well as increased finance for adaptation, and finance for loss and damage. And delaying them any further will only mean more resources are needed. We need climate finance now.”
As the Asian Development Bank (ADB) held the first stage of its annual meeting, climate campaigners protested at its headquarters in Manila to call for an end to all financing for fossil fuels and cancellation of ADB sovereign loans that bankrolled fossil fuel projects.

The ADB’s new energy policy adopted last year stopped any support for extraction and power projects in the coal and oil sectors, but allows fossil gas financing. It has spent over $4.7 billion on gas since the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Its gas finance accounts for over 96% of its fossil fuel financing from 2016-2020.

Asia has more than $350 billion of projects under way to expand liquefied natural gas terminals, gas-burning power plants and pipelines -- triple the estimated investment for Europe -- according to data from Global Energy Monitor.

The campaigners also raised grave concerns on the bank’s Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM), a scheme to retire coal plants within 15 years, that it is developing with several private banks and corporations, asserting that some of the companies are known coal and fossil fuel financiers. The phase-out of coal should not involve using public funds to provide guarantees and bailouts to private corporations who insist on investing in coal energy despite warnings about the inevitability of stranded assets and of the harmful impacts of their projects. Fossil gas, considered by ADB as a transition fuel, may figure prominently in the ETM and thus only undermines ADB’s coal-to-clean shift. Such a scheme is also likely to be loan-financed, adding to debt accumulation in member-countries.

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Among multilateral development banks, ADB stands out as one of the biggest lenders to the region’s fossil fuel-dominated energy sector. From 2009 to 2019, it poured in $42.5 billion into the sector with sovereign loans, grants and technical assistance accounting for three-fourths of the total ($32.1 billion) and the rest financing non-sovereign (private sector) projects.

India has been ADB’s biggest borrower in the energy sector with loans amounting to $7.7 billion from 2009-2019. These do not include the $450 million loan approved in 2008 for the 4,000-MW Tata Mundra Ultra Mega Coal Plant in Gujarat. The ADB’s own compliance review panel reported the lack of consultation with local communities, and failures in compliance with waste and pollution standards resulting in significant harm to the environment, communities’ health and livelihoods.

ADB’s $900 million loan in 2013 for the 600-MW Jamshoro coal-fired power plant in Pakistan was supposed to be the bank’s last dirty energy project, but it has remained heavily invested in fossil gas. In Indonesia, for example, ADB approved in 2016, private sector loans of $400 million loan for the Tangguh Liquified Natural Gas Expansion project, and in 2018, a $250 million loan for the Jawa-1 LNG-to-Power Project.

In Bangladesh, the ADB contributed a $500 million loan to construct the Rupsha 800-Megawatt Combined Cycle Power Plant Project. The project is located near the river-systems of the Sundarban Mangrove Forest, and constantly threatens the livelihoods of around 1,500 fisherfolk communities.

ADB also extended a $120-million loan to the Korea Electric Power Company-Salcon Power Corporation for the construction and operation of a 200-MW coal-fired power plant in the Philippines. The Visayas Base-Load Power Project holds significant respiratory health risks as well as potential environmental dangers from spills of toxic elements such as arsenic, lead, and mercury.
Climate campaigners hold protest as ADB holds annual meeting
May 31 and June 2, 2022

Climate campaigners step up pressure on Japanese megabank SMBC to end fossil fuel finance

Climate campaigners held simultaneous rallies in Indonesia, Bangladesh, India and the Philippines calling on Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMBC), one of the top fossil fuel financiers in the world, to end its fossil fuel finance immediately. The rallies were held in connection with SMBC’s Annual General Meeting, during which shareholders of SMBC will vote on shareholder proposals filed by NGOs that seek to strengthen the bank’s climate change measures.
“Japan is on the front line of a global economy-wide transition driven by the need to adapt to the threats and opportunities of the climate crisis,” said Dr. Sachiko Suzuki, Japan Climate and Energy Researcher at Market Forces. “Change is happening fast and those companies that fail to align their strategy are creating a grave risk to their future. Investors are alive to these threats and demanding action.”

PHOTO: FOSSIL FREE JAPAN

The campaigners said the bank’s current 2050 net-zero is not enough to be consistent with the Paris Agreement’s goal of keeping global temperature rises to below 1.5°C.

The rallies are part of week-long mobilizations of individuals and climate justice groups around the globe. The Asian rallies are made up of members and partners of APMDD and Asian Energy Network (AEN) and carried out as part of the Asia’s Dirty Companies campaign, as well as Fossil Fuel Free Japan’s call for SMBC to put in place concrete climate targets that are consistent with the Paris Agreement.

The campaigners said the bank’s current 2050 net-zero is not enough to be consistent with the Paris Agreement’s goal of keeping global temperature rises to below 1.5°C. They called on SMBC shareholders to take action to stop all financing for coal, gas and oil immediately to keep global warming at the lowest level possible.

SMBC has poured over $109 billion into dirty oil, gas and coal projects between 2016 and 2021 despite being a member of the Net Zero Banking Alliance of banks worldwide, which are committed to aligning their lending and investment portfolios with net-zero emissions by 2050. It also continues to support oil and gas projects in Japan and overseas. One of the most egregious projects is the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), with which SMBC has been actively involved as a financial advisor for French energy giant TotalEnergies and as a project loan arranger.
After being intercepted by the police on their way to SMBC in New Delhi, an area with tight security, climate activists from National Hawker Federation (NHF) and Environics Trust (APMDD member organizations) chose another route and were able to push through their symbolic protest to pressure the Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMBC), one of the top fossil fuel financiers in the world, to end its fossil fuel finance immediately.

SMBC Group announced in May 2021 that it would no longer provide support for new construction or expansion of coal-fired power plants. The following August, it announced a policy committing to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. It became a member of the Net Zero Banking Alliance in October.

Climate campaigners have for years been calling on SMBC to plug the numerous loopholes in its coal policies. While SMBC maintains a policy of “no support for new coal-fired power plant construction or expansion projects,” its support for existing projects continues. It could continue to support technologies such as CCUS and ammonia co-firing, which have not been proven to reduce emissions and/or are not economically viable. This support in turn extends the life of power plants.

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plants that should be decommissioned. Its policies only apply to the project level – financing for companies that are highly dependent on coal continues. SMBC also continues to support coal mining with the exception of mountain-top removal mining. Further, phase-out targets for coal-fired power plants only apply to project financing, not to corporate financing or coal mining.

Under its climate policy statement, SMBC will stop providing financial services to projects with “unabated” coal technologies, and may still fund oil and gas projects. It also allows SMBC to indirectly provide financial services to third parties that may be engaged in unabated coal technologies and other dirty energy projects.

Climate campaigners step up pressure on Japanese megabank SMBC to end fossil fuel finance
The Global Coal Exit List (GCEL) shows that between January 2019 and November 2021, 376 commercial banks provided US$ 363 billion in loans to the coal industry, but only 12 banks accounted for 48 percent of total lending. The top 5 lenders are the three Japanese banks Mizuho Financial, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial and SMBC, Barclays from the UK and Citigroup from the US.

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Climate campaigners step up pressure on Japanese megabank SMBC to end fossil fuel finance
Cycling enthusiasts and ordinary people joined climate campaigners in coordinated cycling events across 11 countries in Asia calling on governments and corporations to save the planet from climate catastrophe. This is the second Pedal for People and Planet event following the first event held in 9 countries last April 24. In the Philippines, bike actions were held in nine cities and provinces with routes that included sites of proposed coal and LNG plants. The biggest event was held in Metro Manila with more than one thousand bikers riding from the University of the Philippines in Quezon City to flood-prone Marikina City.

The event called for a rapid, just and equitable phaseout of fossil fuels and transition to clean energy before 2050 and to reject false solutions to the climate crisis, such as technologies that claim to neutralize the impacts of fossil fuels, as well as market mechanisms that do not deliver what is required to limit global warming and speed up the transition to 100 percent renewable sources.
Asia-wide “cycling and pedaling” events call for bold actions on climate change
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Climate campaigners staged a lightning rally in front of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) headquarters as policymakers, corporations, public financial institutions, and aid organizations held a virtual meeting of the 2022 Asia Clean Energy Forum (ACEF). They called on the meeting participants to commit to make the low-carbon energy transition in Asia and the Pacific happen quickly enough to stay under the 1.5°C limit for global warming, stating that renewable technologies are now the world’s cheapest source of energy.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), almost two-thirds of wind and solar projects built globally in 2020 will be able to generate cheaper electricity than even the world’s cheapest new coal plants. Of the wind, solar and other renewables that came on stream that year, 62% were cheaper than the cheapest new fossil fuel. Thus, it is already possible for energy for electricity, transport, building heating or cooling, and industry to be supplied reliably with 100% renewable energy.
ACEF is one of the largest international events covering key aspects of clean energy promotion in Asia. High-level decision makers, investors, businesses and experts from Asia and throughout the world attend the event. It is hosted and co-organized annually by the ADB. This was the 17th ACEF since its inception in 2006. According to the ADB, “ACEF 2022 operationalizes ADB’s 2021 Energy Policy of promoting the low-carbon transition in the region while supporting universal access to reliable and affordable energy services.”
Filipino climate campaigners slam G7 for debt-creating solutions to global crises

Protest actions were also held in Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. These actions were part of global Days of Action from 24-28 June around the G7 Summit.

Climate campaigners protested near the German Embassy in the Philippines and symbolically repudiated the debts claimed from Asian developing countries. Protesters ripped a mock foreign debt bill representing Asia’s debt amounting to more than US$1 trillion and the Philippines’ external debt of $109.8 billion as of March 2022.

The actions highlighted the massive debt burdens of Asian developing countries and the failure of debt relief efforts promoted by the world’s richest countries. Low and middle-income countries remain in the grip of the crises intensified by the pandemic, with millions pulled into absolute poverty in only the last two years. Asian countries alone face US$1.23 trillion in public external debts, of which $750 billion is owed to private lenders and $482 billion to official lenders such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other governments.

G7 countries are among the world’s largest historical and continuing greenhouse gas emitters and thus, are principally responsible for global warming and the climate crisis.

PHOTOS: RED SIERRA • JASON VALENZUELA
PAT RACCA • JASON DEL ROSARIO
Filipino climate campaigners slam G7 for debt-creating solutions to global crises
Local communities and climate campaigners staged a protest rally in Batangas City, Philippines calling on the three biggest Japanese fossil fuel financiers to stop plans for fossil gas and LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) facilities in the province.

Batangas is one of the biggest fossil gas hubs in Southeast Asia, hosting many gas power plants currently in operation and the site of LNG and Floating Storage Regasification Unit (FSRU) projects in the pipeline. Eight of 27 proposed new plants and seven of nine planned LNG terminals nationally are located in Batangas, especially in Barangays Bolbok, Ilijan, Libjo, Sta. Rita, De la Paz and Matalim in Batangas City, and San Pascual town.
Similar actions were held in Navotas City, Pili in Rizal, Limay in Batangas, Pagbilao in Quezon, Luna in La Union, Lapulapu City in Cebu, Tabango in Leyte, San Carlos City in Negros Occidental and Zamboanga City where new fossil gas projects are slated to be built. These actions serve as a launch to a nationwide campaign called “Break Free Pilipinas, Break Free from Fossil Gas,” according to organizers. The actions in the Philippines are also part of Asia-wide actions taking place this week, including in Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

The Asia-wide actions were held on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of Shareholders of San Miguel Corporation (SMC) and three Japanese fossil fuel financiers: Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMBC), Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG) and Japan’s Energy For A New Era (JERA). These four companies are tagged as part of “Asia’s Dirty Companies”, private and
commercial corporations that are leading in the financing and investments in coal and fossil gas projects in the Asian region.

Fossil gas, commonly referred to as natural gas and LNG in its liquid form, is a fossil fuel touted as cleaner than coal. But fossil gas production emits methane, another greenhouse gas. Methane has a warming effect up to 80 or 90 times more powerful than CO2 over a 20-year timescale. Climate scientists warn that emissions from the fossil gas industry are now growing so rapidly and are responsible for much more methane in the atmosphere than previously known.

SMBC provides a six-year term financing for the upgrading of First Gen’s San Lorenzo 500 MW LNG Power Plant, in Batangas City. JERA and MUFG are involved in the expansion of the 1.2 GW SMC Ilijan LNG Power Plant for the deployment of FSRU, jetty, mooring, cryogenic pipelines and truck loading facilities. The power plant is co-owned by JERA (10%)
Eight proposed fossil gas projects in the Philippines have been successfully stalled as a result of the interventions of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ) and affected communities. These projects amount to a total capacity of 9,792 MW and 2.17 mtpa.

The stalled projects include seven fossil gas plants and one gas processing terminal:
- SMC-Reliance Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant
- SMC San Carlos Project in Negros Occidental
- Tabango LNG Power Plant in Leyte
- SMC-Converge LNG Plant in Cebu
- Sangali LNG Powerplant in Zamboanga City
- Navotas LNG Power Plant in Metro Manila
- Mariveles Samat LNG Powerplant and its processing facility in Bataan

Crucial to the early interventions mounted by PMCJ and affected communities are legal interventions through environmental impact assessment litigation and local government unit litigation. They also established broad community-led alliances resisting fossil gas projects under the “Break Free Pilipinas! Break Free from Fossil Gas” campaign.

The setback in the application process of the identified projects would mean redrawing the timelines for their construction with serious implications on the related processes, including securing financial closing from potential lenders.