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Global Energy Monitor

Japan must abandon new coal and implement a swift 2030 coal phase out to ensure the G7 delivers on climate commitments

Press release

LINK TO REPORT ([PDF](#); available in [Japanese](#))

Japan was one of fourteen countries that commissioned new coal power capacity in 2022, and less than 5% of the country's operating coal capacity has a known planned retirement year, according to Global Energy Monitor's ninth annual survey of the coal plant pipeline.

The country increased its operational coal power fleet by 3 gigawatts (GW), and three under-construction power station units are also slated for completion by 2024. The report finds that the volume of coal projects under development in Japan has been steadily shrinking, with just one new coal-fired being announced since 2018 – a 500 MW coal gasification facility – standing between Japan and a claim of “no new coal” in the country.

Japan's Green Transformation policy document aims to make use of ammonia and hydrogen, or co-firing with other sources, which could potentially increase emissions depending on where it sources ammonia and hydrogen. The country's policies risk locking Japan and other ASEAN countries into expensive technologies, in addition to extending the life of coal power plants instead of early retirements.

The report finds that the amount of operating and planned coal power plants globally fell both in developed countries and in developing countries excluding China in 2022, as existing plants were retired and planned projects cancelled.

But the pace of retirements needs to move four and half times faster – and new coal plants must stop being built – in order to put the world on track to phase out coal power by 2040, as required to meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement.

To stay on track, all existing coal plants must be retired by 2030 in the world's richest countries, and by 2040 everywhere, and there is no room for any new coal plants to come online. While newly proposed coal power capacity has declined significantly, the world is not retiring existing coal plants fast enough.

Phasing out operating coal power by 2040 would require an average of 117 GW of retirements per year, or four and a half times the capacity retired last year. An average of 60 GW must come offline in OECD countries each year to meet their 2030 coal phaseout deadline, and for

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non-OECD countries, 91 GW each year for their 2040 deadline. Accounting for coal plants under construction and in consideration (537 GW) would require even steeper cuts.

“The transition away from existing and new coal isn’t happening fast enough to avoid climate chaos,” said Flora Champenois, lead author of the report and project manager for Global Energy Monitor’s Global Coal Plant Tracker. “At a time when developed countries should be helping the rest of the world both end new coal plant construction and begin their coal transitions in earnest, many – including Japan – are instead planning to operate their coal plants at home far beyond the deadlines required by climate science.

Champenois added, “The Group of Seven major industrial countries accounts for 15%, or 323 GW, of the world’s operating coal capacity and none of the pre-construction coal capacity aside from one proposal in Japan. In 2022, the group pledged to phase out unabated coal and predominantly decarbonize their electricity sectors by 2035; Japan must abandon new coal and implement a swift 2030 coal phase out to ensure the G7 delivers.”

In addition to Global Energy Monitor, the report’s co-authors are the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, E3G, Reclaim Finance, Sierra Club, Solutions for Our Climate, Kiko Network, Climate Action Network Europe, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, Waterkeepers Bangladesh, Alliance for Climate Justice and Clean Energy, and Chile Sustentable.

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