

Capital Minimum Will Be Increased

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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LONDON — Minimum capital requirement for banks will be raised by 2015 and state-owned companies will be encouraged to dispose of stakes in lenders to spur consolidation in the sector.

The limit could be raised to 300 million rubles (\$10.6 million) for newly registered banks in 2012 and existing lenders on Jan. 1, 2015, according to a draft government document published on the Finance Ministry's web site Thursday. The minimum level is already scheduled to rise to 180 million rubles on Jan. 1, 2012, from 90 million rubles now.

The government also plans to encourage state-run corporations, including Gazprom and Russian Railways, to sell their holdings in banks.

"As the consequences of the financial crisis are overcome, the banking sector will develop amid tougher competition," said the government document, which outlines the strategy for the banking sector to 2015.

Russia had 1,012 lenders on Jan. 1, down from 1,106 two years ago, Central Bank data show. Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin said in October that Russia would postpone a proposal to raise the limit to 1 billion rubles, which might reduce the number of banks by half, because of "tension" in the industry.

The government expects further consolidation of the industry, "with the creation of large banking groups, including some that control a large share of the market," according to the document.

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