



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2025/SMEWG60/012

Agenda Item: 8.1.2.c

Korea Startup Ecosystem – K-Starup, Pioneering the Future

Purpose: Information

Submitted by: Korea



**60th Small and Medium Enterprises
Working Group Meeting
Jeju, Korea
3-4 September 2025**

Korean Startup Ecosystem

- K-Startup, Pioneering The Future -



Ministry of SMEs
and Startups

Evolving Policy Framework



Led by Large Corporations



Strong Financial Resources



Extensive Infrastructure



Catalyzed by the
4th Industrial Revolution

Emphasis on Global
Technological
Competitiveness



New Growth Model



Innovative Technology



Spirit of Challenge

CES Innovation Award (Number)

SAMSUNG



Startups

28

33

128

Employment ('23, 10K people)

93.5



27.8



19.8



15.5



11.5



Venture
Companies

SAMSUNG



HYUNDAI



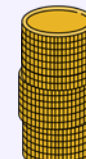
LG



SK

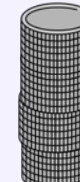
Sales Revenue ('23, Billion USD)

185.2



Venture
Companies

225.8



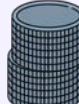
SAMSUNG

210.4



HYUNDAI

153.8



LG

103.3



SK

President
Administration

Startup Policy Agenda

“Driving the third Venture Boom:
Toward a Global Top 4th Startup Powerhouse”

Strengths of the Korean Startup Ecosystem

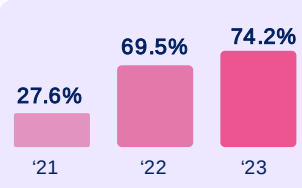


Pool of Excellent Talent

- STEM Graduates
World rank 9
- IT Major Graduates
World rank 8
- Global AI Index
World rank 6
- 3 universities within the top 100 world universities(QS, '24)
 Seoul National Univ
 Yonsei Univ
 Korea Univ



Robust IT Infrastructure

- Leading Tech Companies
   
- Adopting innovative IT technologies
Cloud utilization rate of Korean companies
74.2% ('2023)


Ecosystem Of Korean Startups

Corporate Support for Startups



- SAMSUNG Electronics Co., Ltd.
C-Lab Outside
- POSCO

- HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY

- LOTTE Ventures
L-CAMP
- LG Science Park
SUPERSTART
- KT
KT Bridge Lab

Government Support System



- USD 2.52B Startup support budget
13 Central Ministries
+
105 Local Governments
- Reliable startup support organizations
 
  

Startup Support Budget
in 2025

USD 2.5B

(Exchange Rate 1,307 KRW / USD, '24.9)

Startup Support Budget
for the past 10 years

+570%



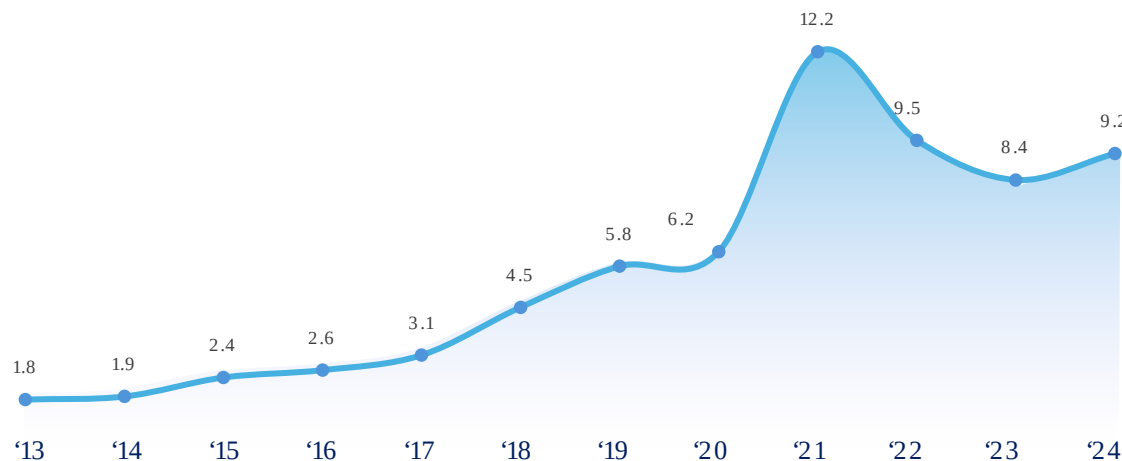


Venture Investment Amount
in 2024

USD 9.2B

Venture Investment Growth Rate
over the past 10 years

+494%



Korean Venture
Investment

5th in the world

'15	'17	'19	'21	'24
6 th	7 th	6 th	7 th	5 th *

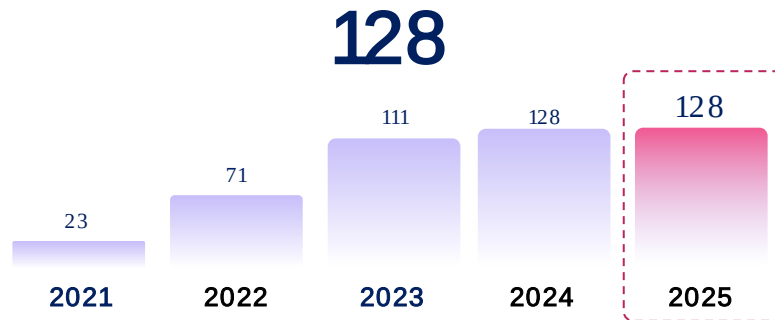
* U.S., China, U.K., India, and South Korea (Pitchbook · Preqin)

Venture Investment Growth Rate
from 2020 to 2024

+47.5%

Korea	USA	UK
+47.5%	+20%	+9%

CES Innovation Award Startups (Number)



<Comparative Figures Among Major Countries>

Korea	USA	UK
128	72	9

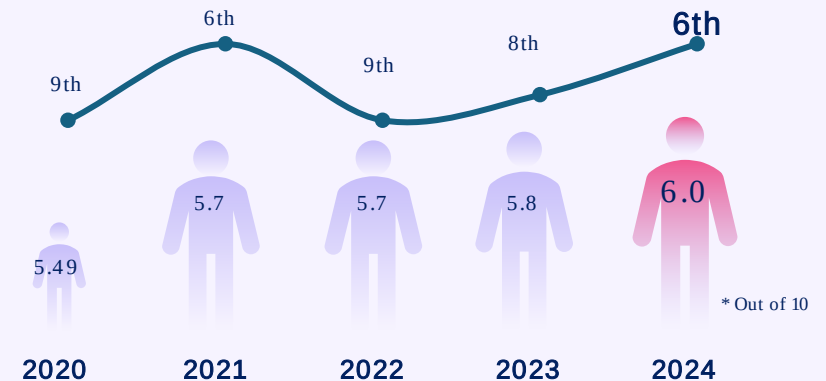
Seoul's Startup Ecosystem

8th in the world



Korean Entrepreneurship Index

6.0 points





01

DIPS 1000+

Deep Tech Incubator 1,000+ project

Overview	Supporting over 1,000 deep tech startups to drive innovation across 10 key sectors by 2027
Eligibility	Deep tech startups with breakthrough technologies in 10 targeted sectors
Budget	USD90M
Support Scale	579 companies

Support Program Sectors

System
Semiconductor

Bio-Health

Future
MobilityEco-friendly
•Energy

Robotics



AI-Big Data

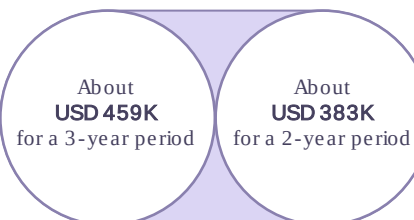
Cyber-
Security
NetworkSpace, Aviation,
and Marine
TechnologyNext-
Generation
Nuclear PowerQuantum
Technology

Support Details

- Funding for global scale-up and post-R&D commercialization
- Support for diverse innovators and attraction of global investment

commer-
cialization

R&D

scale-up
commercializationCompanies
with Excellent
PerformanceApprox.
USD 765K
for a 2-year period

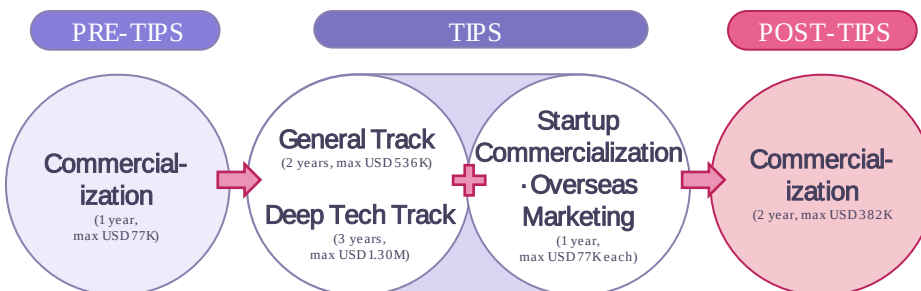
02



TIPS Program



Support Details



- Operating step-by-step program
PRE-TIPS → TIPS → POST-TIPS
Tailored to startup growth stages by investment attraction, etc.
- **TIPS : Max USD 536K**
(R&D max USD 383K (2 years) +
Commercialization etc. max USD 153K)
- **Deep Tech TIPS : Max USD 1.3M**
(R&D max USD 1.15M (3 years) +
Commercialization etc. max USD 153K)

Overview	Government-supported funding for commercialization and R&D, targeting high-potential startups selected by private sector partners	
Eligibility	Startups within 7 years of establishment that have secured investment from TIPS-affiliated investors	
Budget	R&D Non R&D	USD 365M USD 87M
Support Scale	700 companies	

Cooperation Partnership with the Private Sector

01

Public-Private Open Innovation Partnership

Overview	Drive mutual growth by linking major corporations and public institutions with innovative startups
Eligibility	Startups within 7 years of establishment
Budget	USD 10M
Support Scale	120 startups, With approximately 70 large enterprises · medium-sized companies · public institutions

Support Details

- Commercialization funds up to USD 87k and additional support of R&D funds
- **Three Open Innovation (O/I) program** models tailored to connect companies and startups

Top-Down Challenge Model

Companies with specific needs propose tasks for startups to address

Bottom-Up Proposal Model

Startups submit their own proposals, with selection based on company interest

On-Demand Model

Flexible, collaborative exploration between companies and startups

Partner Corporate



Cooperation Partnership with the Private Sector

02

Around X Program Around X

Overview	Supporting the growth and global expansion startup companies by the government and global companies collaboration
Eligibility	Startups within 7 years of establishment * Emerging industry startups eligible for support up to 10 years
Budget	USD 40M
Support Scale	395 companies With 13 global companies

Korean Government

- Provide commercialization funds (up to USD 153k) and tailored programs such as education, mentoring, and networking

Commerciali-
zation funds
(Max. USD 153K)

Startup-
specialized
Program

Global Company

- Leverage industry expertise and infrastructure to support specialized programs in key fields like mobile applications (Google) and artificial intelligence

Solution

Attracting
Investments

Cloud
Platform

Consulting

...

Collaborate Global Companies

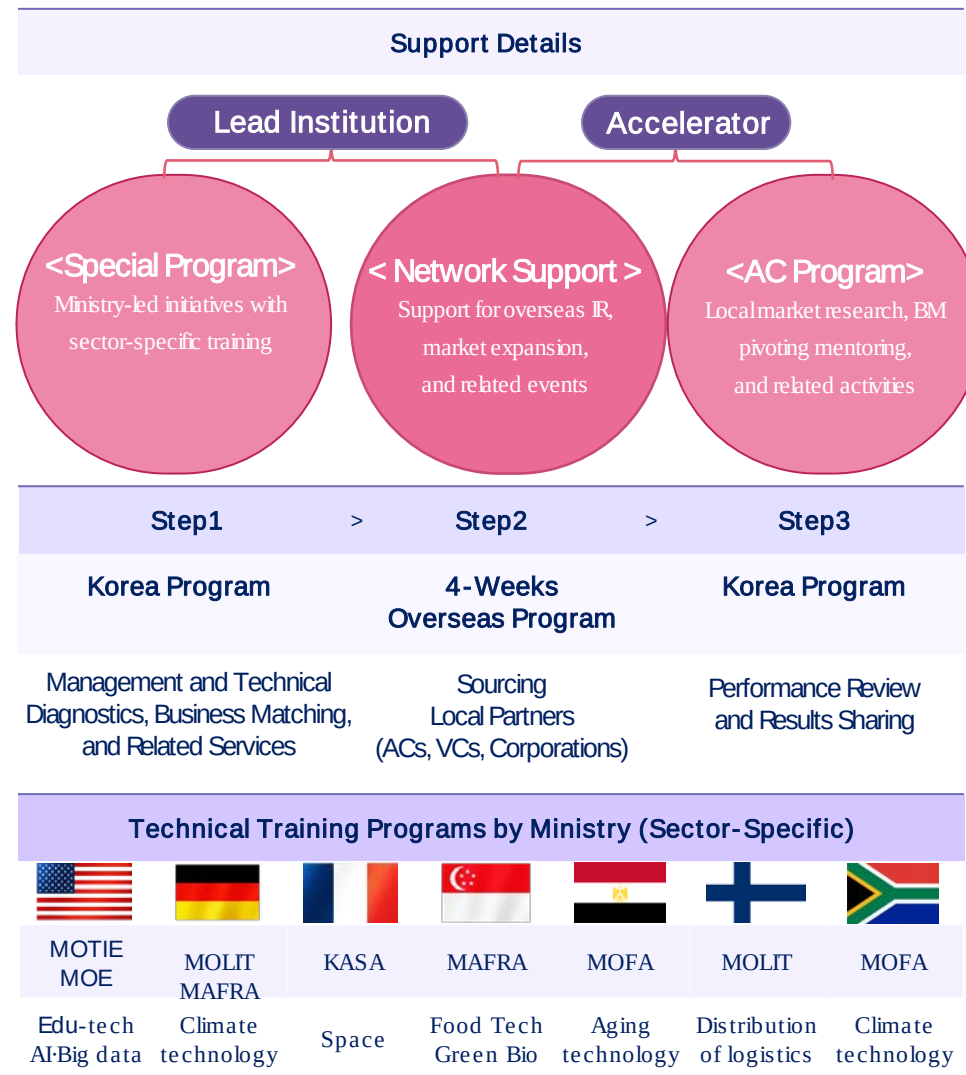




01

Global Acceleration Program

Overview	Assess global market potential and strengthen competitiveness of startups targeting international markets
Eligibility	Startups established within the past 7 years * Emerging industry startups eligible for support up to 10 years
Support Scale	140 Companies





02

Foreign VC Investment Fund



Foreign VC Investment Fund Management Company

A America

BlueRun Ventures
Altos Ventures
Big Basin Capital
Storm Ventures
500 Startups
Draper Athena
Strong Ventures
AMV
TTCP
Walden
Formation Group
Applied Ventures
Translink Capital
ERA
White Star Capital
Kensington
ACVC Management
Third Prime Capital
Patron Management

Primer Sazze
Bam Ventures
GFT Ventures
Northgate Capital
MITVP
RPS Ventures
SOSV
DCM Ventures
G Squared
Angel Ventures

B France

Partech
Eurazeo
Cathay Innovation
Korelya Capital
Kurma

C Sweden

Northzone

D UK

Greyhound
Amadeus Capital
Partners

E UAE

Shorooq Partners

F China

Fortune Link
Yuansheng Bioventure
Legend Capital
KCA Partners
Northern Light VC
Highlight Capital
Access Ventures

G Singapore

Golden Gate Ventures
Antler
Vickers
Altara Ventures
Vertex Ventures
Cento
K3 Venture Partners
Qualgro Partners

H Indonesia

Kejora Ventures
AC Ventures
MDI

I Malaysia

Gobi Partners
RHL Ventures

J Vietnam

Do Ventures

K Thailand

True Incube

L Philippines

ADB

M Japan

Headline Asia
Global Brain
Corporation

Exemplary Investment Cases

rebellions_

- Established in June 2020, fabless semiconductor company
- Received USD 5.4M investment from Global Fund in 2024
- Raised USD 124M in Series B, company valuation of USD 941B

QANDA Team

- Established in June 2015, AI-based learning solution
- Received total \$9.1M investment from Global Fund in 2019 and 2021
- Raised USD 59M in Series C, ranked 1st in Japan and Southeast Asian markets with 90 million users

/*elice*/

- Established in November 2015, AIdedutech
- Received USD 11.3M investment from Global Fund in 2024
- Raised USD 15M in Series C, established corporations in Singapore, US, etc., and expanded globally

Overview

Investing in global VC funds to help Korean startups secure international investment and expand globally. Requires a minimum investment match to the fund's contribution

Eligibility

74 Global Funds (USD 10.2 B, as of May 2025)
*Investment in 652 Korean Companies: USD 1.1B
*1.8 times of contribution USD 633M of Fund of Funds

Scale of Investment ('25)

USD 150M

01

Global Startup Center

Overview	Operate a comprehensive support center for international entrepreneurs, providing end-to-end assistance from discovery and entry to settlement and growth in Korea
Eligibility	Foreign entrepreneurs wishing to enter the Korean market
Status	1 location (TIPS town, Seoul)



Support Details

- One-Stop Services for International Entrepreneurs (Entry-Settlement-Growth):
On-Site Foreign Language Experts and Visa Consultants

- Facility Overview (495㎡):

- One-Stop Service Counter
- Co-working Space
- Amenities
- Conference Rooms
- Meeting Rooms

< Discovery & Entry >	< Settlement >	< Growth >
•Visa Consultation •OASIS Training	•Corporation Establishment •Patent, Labor, and Administrative Support •Co-working space	•Business Development Program •Corporate Partnership Matching

02

K-Startup Grand Challenge



Support Details

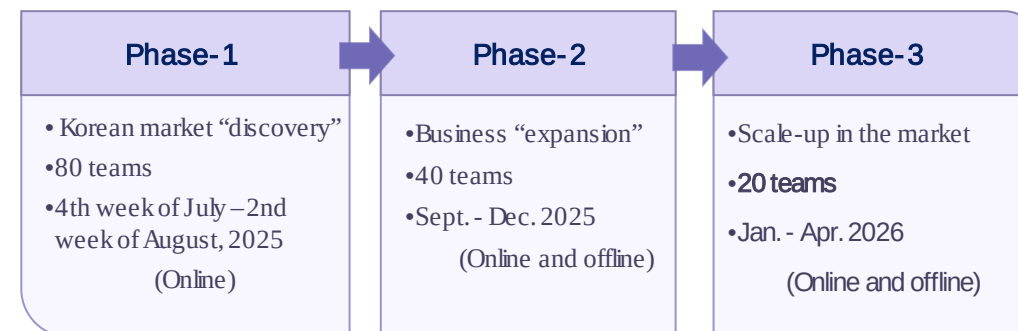
2025 Program Overview

- 80 International Startup Teams from 19 Countries
- Startup Visa Support and Korean Accelerating Program

K-Startup Grand Challenge

- Prize money (Total USD 0.3M), business acceleration, visa & incorporation support, office space, for global startup's market expansion, settlement and scale-up in Korea.

Overview	International startup competition and incubation program designed to facilitate market entry into South Korea.
Eligibility	Foreign startups within 7 years (non-Korean nationality)
Support Scale	80 companies





01

Local Startup Hubs (CCEI)

Overview	17 Local Startup Hubs Nationwide: Supporting local startup ecosystem for creative business development * Plus 2 independent centers (Pohang, Bitgaram)
Eligibility	Prospective and startups (within 7 years)
Status	19 locations

Support Details

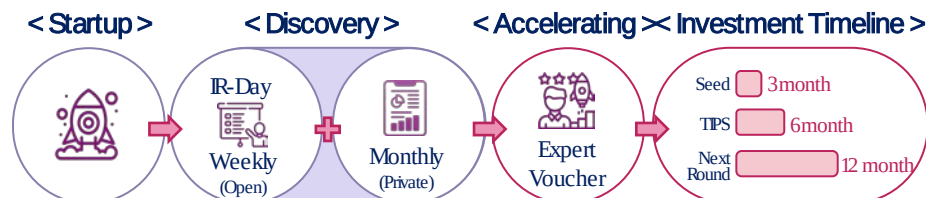
- Regional Startup Support Program: Innovation, Business Development, Market Access, Investment and Global Expansion

< Regional Corporate Partnership Overview >



Startup-BuS Program

- Operating Year-Round **'Startup-BuS Program'** (Build up Strategy for Startups)
: From Discovery to Initial Investment, TIPS, and Follow-up Investment





02

Startup Innovation University

Overview	Designate top startup-supporting universities as entrepreneurship hubs to boost regional and university-based startups
Eligibility	Prospective and startups (within 7 years)
Budget	USD60M
Support Scale	803 companies

Support Details

- Designation of 11 participating universities in 6 regions nationwide, operation
- In connection with the regional specialization project, fostering regional startup companies that lead regional core industries
- Promotion of university-led creation of jobs utilizing university owned public technologies

< Regional Innovation >

(Prospective) startup
companies located within
the region

< Regional Specialization >

Startup companies
discovered through the
regional specialization
project

< First-Time >

First-time youth
entrepreneurs (aged 29
or younger)

Support University



대구대학교

부산대학교
PUSAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY전북대학교
CHONBUK NATIONAL UNIVERSITY전남대학교
CHONNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

한남대학교

한양대학교
HANYANG UNIVERSITY호서대학교
HOSEO UNIVERSITY

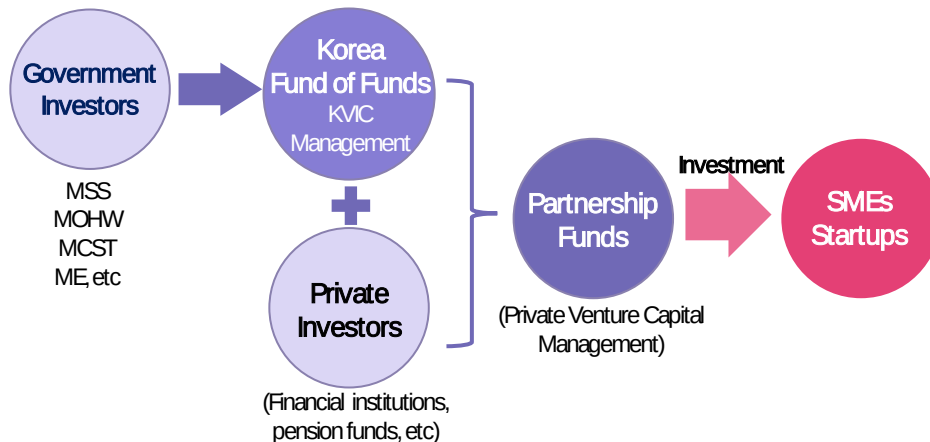
Foundation for Startup Growth and Success

01



Korea Fund of Funds

Overview	Agovernment-supported fund that invests in venture funds managed by private venture capital firms, focusing on indirect investment in companies through a “Fund of Funds” structure
Eligibility	SMEs and startups in strategic sectors needing policy support, such as deep tech, early-stage startups, youth-led businesses, women-led enterprises, and re-entrepreneurs
Investment Scale ('25)	USD 1.6B
Fundraising Target ('25)	USD 2.9B



Support Details

the cumulative size of the Fund of Funds the cumulative size of the Venture Fund the cumulative size of investment companies

USD **7.90** B USD **32.43** B **11K⁺**

- From 2005 to May 2025, the Korean government invested USD 7.90B in the Korea Fund of funds
- As of May 2025, Korea Fund of Funds created 1,347 venture funds (USD 32.43B), investing USD 25.04B in 11,000 SMEs and startups
- Performance : 308 venture funds (USD 6.46B) have been liquidated, recovering 1.47 times the principal and realizing an average annual return of 8%

02

Global Startup Festival, COMEUP



Overview	A premier global startup festival that brings together the startup ecosystem, including international startups, venture capitalists, and corporate representatives from around the world
Eligibility	Local and international startups, VCs, global corporate representatives, media, etc.
Schedule	mid-December

Support Details

Participating countries
as of 2024

45 countries

Biz-Matching
as of 2024

1,860 cases

- Starting from 2019, providing a comprehensive program that allows global startups to interact through global conferences, open innovation, community events, etc.
- Selecting innovative startups representing 'Comeup Stars'
- Hosting various startup events in conjunction, such as Global CVC Conference, K-Startup Grand Challenge Demo Day, Challenge! K-Startup Competition, etc