

Ministry of SMEs and Startups Accelerates Making Results in Cooperation with the UAE Ministry of Economy

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (Minister LEE Young) signed an MOU for cooperation for SMEs and innovation with the UAE Ministry of Economy (Minister Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri) during her visit to the UAE (January 14-17) in the presence of the summits of Korea and the UAE.

To achieve feasible results, the MSS will promptly take follow-up measures including launching a public-private cooperation task force team, and organising a discussion channel for the working-level staff with the UAE Ministry of Economy.

In particular, in consideration of UAE's Entrepreneurial Nation 2.0 Project* that aims to prepare for the oil-free era, the goal is to focus on cooperation to foster startups and attract venture investments, and expand the scope of cooperation to technological exchanges and exports.

* Foster 8,000 SMEs and startups, and 20 unicorn companies by 2030

The major follow-up measures are as follows.

① Public-private Task Force Team for UAE Cooperative Projects

The Ministry will immediately launch a chief-level task force team consisted of working-level staff not only from the startup, venture, export, and technology sectors of the Ministry of SMEs and Startups and affiliated organisations, but also the private sector with experts in the Middle East and related fields* (January), and expand the discussion channel that has already been established in the discussions for the MOU to the task force team.

* Academia (Middle East research institutes, etc.), SMEs (companies that have entered or wish to enter the Middle East), associations (related fields), related companies (Middle East marketing), etc.

② Support Startups Entering the UAE

(Fast-Following Startup 1000⁺ Project) The UAE emphasised the willingness to cooperate in fields including bio, AI, and green energy, which are closely related to the Ministry of SMEs and Startups' Fast-Following Startup 1000⁺ Project.

Accordingly, among the Fast-Following Startup 1000⁺ Project companies (TBC in April-May), those who wish to enter the UAE market will be selected separately. The Ministry will make a request to the UAE Ministry of Economy to set up an on-site market entry support program.*

* As part of the Entrepreneurial Nation 2.0 project, the UAE Ministry of Economy has organised support programs for foreign companies that are entering the UAE market

Also, the companies will be connected to the UAE Trade Delegation Team to be dispatched during the first half of the year. The Ministry will actively support fast-following startups of Korea to attract investment in the UAE.

(Support exchanges among early-stage startups) Furthermore, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the United Arab Emirates, a greater range of information related to the UAE will be shared, and the Ministry also plans to host a networking event using the Entrepreneurial Nation 2.0 platform.*

* An online platform managed by the UAE Ministry of Economy (theentrepreneurialnation.com) that provides information and the opportunity to apply to various public-private cooperative programs

- Also, the Ministry will encourage companies from various countries that are currently active in business in the UAE to participate in COMEUP, Korea's largest startup festival (planned to be held in November).

③ Expand Cooperation in the Venture Investment Sector

As part of the major agenda in the MOU between the Ministry of SMEs and Startups and the UAE's Ministry of Economy, the two ministries will expand investment cooperation and exchanges, and establish a joint fund to support investments in excellent startups.

In particular, at a bilateral meeting between the Minister of Trade under the UAE Ministry of Economy,* a consensus was reached to organise a joint investment in startups of the two countries using the UAE's investment plan of USD 30 billion. Based on this consensus, the UAE public-private task force team will actively pursue follow-up measures regarding the investment.

* Bilateral meeting of the Ministry of SMEs and Startups - UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade (Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi) (January 16, Abu Dhabi)

④ Expand Exports and Technology Exchange

(Export Business Incubator, BI) The Dubai BI, which opened in 2006, will be reformed to become a Global Business Centre (GBC) focusing on shared space, specialised programs, and on-site networking (First half of 2023).

* (Location) Jebel Ali Free Zone, Dubai; (Size) Approximately 403m², 11 resident companies; (Facilities) One conference room (capacity: 12 people), one small meeting room, smart office (capacity: 15 people), etc.

(Technology Exchange*) There will be a joint online-offline technology exchange seminar with the UAE Ministry of Economy to connect companies in need of technology in the UAE* and Korean SMEs and startups with innovative technology.

* UAE companies in need of technology will be identified with the Ministry of Economy's Entrepreneurial 2.0 platform

Minister LEE Young stated, "UAE's active startup fostering policies will become an opportunity for Korean startups to enter the global market."

LEE emphasised, "We will closely cooperate with the UAE Ministry of Economy to ensure that Korean startups and SMEs can be at the centre of UAE's investment of USD 30 billion, which was achieved by the Korean president."

Also, the Ministry of SMEs and Startups signed an MOU to expand the cooperation for SMEs in the content and consumer goods sector with DMI, the official media company of the Government of Dubai* during the visit to the UAE.

* Dubai Media Incorporated: Official media company owned by the Government of Dubai; owns various media channels including TV (8), radio (2), and newspaper (2)

To follow up with the MOU, a trade delegation team of 50 companies will be dispatched in June. The team includes SMEs from the content sector, as well as the beauty and healthcare device sectors, which are highly in demand in the UAE.

In particular, DMI will also join in selecting the companies in the content sector to reflect the ideas from the UAE market. There will also be further negotiations regarding the joint promotion of the event.