

Contact	Global Media Relations	Bizinfo1@korea.kr
----------------	------------------------	-------------------

Calling Promising SMEs for K-Beauty Exports! Ministry of SMEs and Startups Launches ‘K-Beauty 100-UP Project’ in Collaboration with the Private Sector

As a follow-up to the ‘Measures to Enhance the Global Competitiveness of K-Beauty SMEs and Startups (July 24),’ recruitment for companies to participate in the ‘K-Beauty 100-UP Project’ now open in collaboration with Amazon, COSMAX, Kolmar Korea, Olive Young, and Shinsegae Duty-Free

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS, Minister OH Youngju) announced that it is recruiting companies to participate in the ‘K-Beauty 100-UP Project,’ which aims to discover and nurture promising small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the K-beauty sector through collaboration with Amazon, Kolmar Korea, Cosmax, Olive Young, and Shinsegae Duty-Free.

Cosmetics are the top export item for SMEs. In the first half of 2024, SME cosmetics exports reached USD 3.3 billion, marking a 30.8% increase compared to the same period last year, achieving the highest performance ever recorded for the first half of the year. In addition, exports to the United States rose by 61.5%, positioning the U.S. as the largest export destination for cosmetics sold by Korean SMEs.

To accelerate this export growth trend and support more SMEs in their export endeavors, the MSS announced the ‘Measures to Enhance the Global Competitiveness of K-Beauty SMEs and Startups’ on July 24, 2024. The recruitment of companies for the K-Beauty 100-UP Project is a follow-up to the ‘Measures to Enhance the Global Competitiveness of K-Beauty SMEs and Startups’. This project aims to support the exports of K-beauty SMEs through collaboration between the government and the private sector. The term “100-UP” reflects the goal of growing SME cosmetics exports to over USD 10 billion by 2027, as well as the government’s commitment to actively backing (supporting) SMEs.

The K-Beauty 100-UP Project consists of three programs: the ‘K-Beauty Creator Challenge,’ the ‘K-Beauty Super Rookie with Young,’ and the ‘K-Strategic Item Awards.’

First, the K-Beauty Creator Challenge, in collaboration with Amazon, COSMAX, and Kolmar Korea, is a program aimed at discovering and nurturing promising companies that will lead K-beauty in the United States. The program operates in two tracks: the 'Promising Export Products Track' and the 'New Product Ideas Track.'

The Promising Export Products Track is focused on identifying cosmetics sold by SMEs with high export and growth potential. The New Product Ideas Track, on the other hand, allows SMEs and prospective entrepreneurs to propose innovative ideas by referencing the 'Insights for Entering the U.S. Market' provided by Amazon, based on the analysis of recent cosmetics sales performance and search volume data. This track aims to discover ideas with a high likelihood of success.

The evaluation will be conducted in three stages: preliminary, main, and final rounds, with plans to select a total of 10 outstanding companies, five from each track. The selected companies will receive support including Amazon's marketing strategy training and consulting, as well as manufacturing consulting from COSMAX and Kolmar Korea. In addition, they will be connected to export support programs offered by the MSS in the following year.

The target participants are SMEs with cosmetics export performance of less than USD 1 million in the previous year, and prospective entrepreneurs are also eligible to participate in the New Product Ideas Track. The application period runs from October 2 (Wednesday) to October 23 (Wednesday). For detailed information and to apply for the K-Beauty Creator Challenge, applicants can visit the GoBiz Korea website (kr.gobizkorea.com) starting from October 2.

Second, the 'K-Super Rookie with Young' program, conducted in collaboration with Olive Young, is aimed at discovering promising export products that can challenge and expand their exports by leveraging Olive Young's infrastructure. This year, 20 companies will be selected for a pilot project based on an evaluation of expertise in the cosmetics (beauty) sector that Olive Young possesses.

Selected companies will receive support from Olive Young, including global expansion strategy consultations, dedicated sales space arrangements and entry at select Olive Young stores frequented by international tourists, participation in events to meet buyers, and connections to the export support programs offered by the MSS in the following year.

The target participants are SMEs with cosmetics export performance of less than USD 1 million in the previous year, and companies will be recruited from October 10 (Thursday) to October 23 (Wednesday) over a two-week period. For detailed information and applications for the K-Super Rookie with Young program, applicants can visit the Olive Young website (corp.oliveyoung.com) starting from October 10.

Lastly, the 'K-Strategic Item Awards' program, conducted in collaboration with Shinsegae

Duty-Free, is aimed at selecting and nurturing outstanding K-beauty SMEs that have recently gained prominence in the global market, particularly in terms of export growth. A total of 15 companies will be selected, and the chosen companies will receive support from Shinsegae Duty-Free, including pop-up store operations and strategic consultations, as well as connections to the export support programs offered by the MSS in the following year.

The target participants are all SMEs that possess their own cosmetics, regardless of export volume, and recruitment will take place over a two-week period from October 10 (Thursday) to October 23 (Wednesday). For detailed information and applications for the K-Strategic Item Awards program, applicants can visit the FANFANDAERO website (www.fanfandaero.kr) starting from October 10.

SMEs can apply for the three programs simultaneously; however, if selected for multiple programs, they must choose only one to participate in.

Minister OH Youngju of the MSS stated, "Cosmetics are a key export item for our SMEs and their overall exports are led by small and medium-sized enterprises." She added, "Currently, only 10% of cosmetics-exporting SMEs account for 85% of the exports, with companies exporting over USD 1 million. We will actively support our SMEs to become true global leaders in the cosmetics sector by promoting growth into SMEs that export over USD 1 million through collaboration with the private sector, which has excellent export infrastructure."