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## **Ministry of SMEs and Startups Recruits Startups to Participate in the 'Public-Private Collaboration project for Open Innovation'**

SEJONG – The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) is recruiting approximately 50 startups to participate in the 'Public-Private Collaboration project for Open Innovation' for 2025. The recruitment for the Top-Down and Bottom-Up programs will begin on Wednesday, February 12.

The 'Public-Private Collaboration project for Open Innovation' is an initiative by the Ministry of SMEs and Startups designed to foster open collaboration between large enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), public institutions, and startups. The project aims to establish mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborative systems. It includes three key programs: 1) Top-Down, 2) Bottom-Up, and 3) On-Demand.

Through this project, the startup SILI ENERGY, which collaborated with Hyundai Corporation in 2024, successfully developed recycling technology for silicon materials for next-generation secondary batteries utilizing solar glass provided by Hyundai Corporation and has filed for patents both domestically and internationally.

In addition, DOWHAT, in collaboration with Hoban Group, has successfully developed a hotel-friendly kiosk with check-in, check-out, and payment features by integrating it with their existing solutions. The 'Public-Private Collaboration project for Open Innovation' is playing a pivotal role in fostering a cooperative ecosystem where businesses and startups can grow together.

The selected startups in 2025 will receive financial support for commercialization up to KRW 120 million that can be utilized during the process of idea refinement and collaboration for

problem-solving. In addition, there are plans for follow-up support through startup growth technology development funds up to KRW 120 million.

① Top-Down program

The Top-Down program involves large companies and other demand-driven enterprises proposing collaboration tasks, with startups tasked with developing solutions. Using the SME technology roadmap, four major areas for task solicitation and discovery were identified in January 2025. A total of 30 collaboration tasks from 26 demand enterprises eager to partner with startups were selected. The Top-Down program will choose approximately 30 startups through two evaluation stages: document review and presentations, followed by mentoring.

② Bottom-Up Program (Private Sector Linkage, Cluster Linkage, Free Economic Zone Linkage)

The Bottom-Up program facilitates collaboration between startups and large, medium-sized, and public enterprises, in alignment with existing startup nurturing programs in the private sector. Starting in 2025, a new track for Free Economic Zone linkage has been introduced to promote balanced development and support the revitalization of local economies. A total of 20 collaboration tasks have been selected from 20 demand enterprises, with 10 from private sector linkage, 7 from cluster linkage, and 3 from Free Economic Zone linkage.

The Bottom-Up program allows large enterprises and other organizations to publicly recruit startups for specific tasks. Approximately 20 collaboration startups will be selected through internal evaluations, and these startups will be recommended for support as part of the 'Public-Private Collaboration project for Open Innovation'