

MSS Invites Startups to Develop Better Public Services Using Public Data

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS), headed by Acting Minister and First Vice Minister Roh Yong-Seok, will accept applications from September 15 to October 6 for a program that helps startups use public data to test their technologies and bring new solutions to market.

The program follows measures announced in April to encourage entrepreneurship nationwide. These included expanding collaboration between startups in strategic industries, large and mid-sized companies, and public institutions, while opening access to public data in fields such as healthcare and safety where business demand is high.

MSS has been working with other ministries to identify opportunities for such collaboration, including with the Ministry of National Defense and the Defense Acquisition Program Administration on defense projects, and the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment on climate technology. Through these partnerships, startups can use participating organizations' facilities and resources to test their technologies, develop prototypes and prepare their products for market.

The public data program extends this approach to public services, helping startups work with public institutions to address service challenges and develop commercially viable solutions.

Projects Proposed by Public Institutions and Startups

The program accepts proposals from both public institutions and startups.

Public institutions can propose challenges they want to address with startups using data they are able to release. Startups can also propose projects that require data not yet publicly available and receive help obtaining access.

Following a call for proposals in August, MSS selected 22 challenges from 18 public bodies: two national agencies, two local education offices, 12 public institutions, one local public corporation and one regional public hospital.

They include the national data agency, the Defense Acquisition Program Administration, Korea Airports Corporation, Korea Expressway Corporation, the Korea Institute of Energy Research, the Gangnam-Seocho and Gangdong-Songpa education offices, the Yongsan District Facilities Management Corporation and Seosan Medical Center.

Using Data to Improve Crowd and Road Safety

The national data agency has proposed developing an AI model to predict crowd density in key locations during festivals, holidays and other events. The model would help inform public safety policies, prevent crowd-related accidents and make travel easier.

Korea Expressway Corporation has proposed developing and testing technology that uses CCTV footage to detect rain and snow and help road operators prepare for black ice. Real-time risk information would allow operators to respond quickly and take preventive measures, such as applying deicing agents before ice forms.

Funding to Test and Develop Solutions

MSS will select around 20 startups through the current application round to work on challenges proposed by public institutions. Selected startups will receive up to KRW 100 million each to test their technologies, develop prototypes and prepare their solutions for market in collaboration with their public-sector partners.

They may also qualify for support through related MSS technology development programs. The Startup Growth Technology Development Program provides up to KRW 200 million over 18 months, while the Public-Private Joint Technology Commercialization Program offers up to KRW 600 million over two years. Eligibility and funding will depend on each program's requirements.

Separately, 63 startups have submitted proposals to use public data that has not yet been released. Work is underway with the National Information Society Agency's business support center for public data access to help obtain the necessary datasets.

Startups selected through this process will be eligible for the same support: up to KRW 100 million for collaborative projects, along with potential funding through related technology development programs.

"Helping startups use public data lays the groundwork for bringing innovative technologies to market and delivering public services that make a meaningful difference in people's lives," said Cho Kyeong-Won, Director General for Startup Policy at MSS. "By opening access to data that businesses need and expanding opportunities for collaboration, we will help startups grow and build on that success to encourage more people to pursue entrepreneurship."

For details on the Public Data Open Innovation program and how to apply, visit the K-Startup website at www.k-startup.go.kr.

For more news and updates on Korea's SME and startup policies, follow the Ministry's official **LinkedIn** page:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/mss1357>