OPEN
출처표시 상업적금지 변경금지
공공누리 공공저작물 자유이용허락

MAGAZINE

KOICA

2025 VOL.7

ODA TRENDS
What's happening around the world?

INFOGRAPHICS
Central Asia at a glance

THEMATIC FOCUS
'Smart power' flows through Central Asia

GLOBAL ODA
France's ODA as told by French Embassy officials

Central Asia, Shared Future







READER'S LETTERS

04 Tell MAGAZINE KOICA what's on your mind!
Your Voice

ODA TRENDS

06 What's happening around the world?
Global trends in development cooperation

COVER STORY

08 Korea and Central Asia - toward a coalition of middle powers aiming for peace and shared prosperity in Eurasia
Special contribution by Lee Ji-eun, head of the Department of Central Asian studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

THEMATIC FOCUS

10 Central Asia at a glance
ODA Infographic

12 Once with poor infrastructure, Uzbekistan becomes Central Asian medical powerhouse
Strengthening Capacity for Response to Infectious Diseases to Reduce Disease Burden in Uzbekistan



17 Skilled workers nurture dreams with Korea's help
Uzbekistan Vocational Training Center Construction Project

20 'Smart power' flows through Central Asia
Power Supply Project Phase-II in Romit, Tajikistan

22 "Korean-style" e-government blossoms in Central Asia
Modernization and Capacity Development of the Advanced "Administrative Information Sharing and Interoperability System" in Kyrgyzstan

24 From education and livelihoods to self-governance : Creating self-sufficient villages
Integrated Rural Development Project in Kyrgyzstan

28 Why the 'private investment promotion' support project in Uzbekistan is highly regarded
GGGI Green Rehabilitation Investment Project for Karakalpakstan Republic to Address Impact of the Aral Sea Crisis

31 30 years of volunteer dispatch to Uzbekistan State World Languages University: a bridge of trust built through language
Project Volunteer to Raise Awareness of Korean Culture in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

35 I will become the 'seed' that leads the future of Tajikistan
Meeting with trainees of the global training program

38 "I'll learn KOICA's ODA know-how and accelerate KazAID's development"
Interview with Nazgul Sharipova, manager of KazAID

41 "I want to create works conveying the history of the Koryoin's forced relocation"
Interview with Viktor Moon, a Koryoin master painter

44 Roots planted in Gwangju, village of the diaspora
"Koryoin Village": Central Asia in Korea

CONFERENCE

48 KOICA gives Korean firms wings as they enter global ODA market
The 2025 Development cooperation participation strategy briefing

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

53 Transboundary air pollution: eight Asian countries respond jointly through Pandora
Pan-Asia Rartnership for Geospatial Air Pollution Information

56 Educational innovation experiment in Zanzibar to foster national talent
Ehhancing the Quality of Secondary School Education through Holistic Approach in Zanzibar, Tanzania

INTERVIEW

58 "I hope the value of ODA will be more widely known through my work"
Interview with Pang Myung-se, CEO of Junglim CM

ESSAY

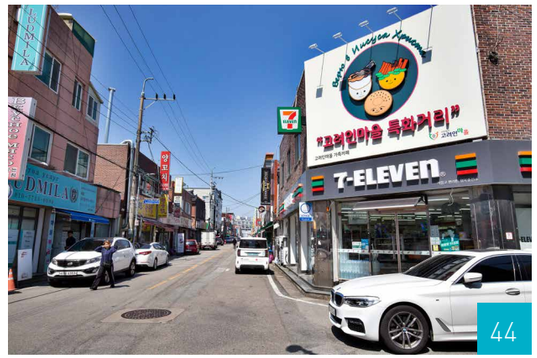
62 A bridge between Cambodia and Korea
Contribution by Som SomNeang, a local staff member of the KOICA Cambodia office

GLOBAL ODA

64 "ODA is a form of solidarity to address the common challenges of humanity"
France's ODA as told by French Embassy officials







NEWS

67 KOICA NEWS
Latest issues at a glance

CLOSING REMARKS

73 Development cooperation driving mutually beneficial partnerships with Central Asia



Your voice

Tell MAGAZINE KOICA what's on your mind!

I like the Thematic Focus section to read because there is a lot of engagement in different sectors for students, women advocates, artists and professionals that shared their ideas and opinions. This section brought a wider view of the concerning matters we are encountering nowadays, like eradicating violence, world peace, young generation dreams, start-up projects and many more.
- bmi****@gmail.com

Though news around the world is not always good, reading MAGAZINE KOICA gives hope and inspiration. Stories on the latest ODA trends highlight humanitarian deeds like in VOL. 6. They tackle climate change, food problems, waste management, and emergency support, which are all concerning matters that we face today. Glad to know that KOICA is extending help to those countries.
- myr***@gmail.com

Include more first-person stories and interviews from local beneficiaries and young global participants involved in KOICA projects. These personal narratives add emotional depth, showcase real-life impact, and inspire readers to engage more actively in development cooperation. A dedicated 'Voices from the Field' section could highlight these diverse experiences in each issue.
- 111***@gmail.com

What sets MAGAZINE KOICA apart is its emotional sincerity. It doesn't just list achievements—it tells the story behind them. You get to read about a teacher in Cambodia who inspires her students thanks to KOICA's training programs, or a farming project in Africa that's turning barren land into a source of pride. These are not abstract success stories—they're deeply personal and often quite moving. The magazine doesn't shy away from showing the slow, challenging nature of real change. And that's what makes it trustworthy. I also enjoy the segments that reflect Korea's own development journey—it gives global readers a deeper appreciation of how Korea's experience shapes KOICA's mission. For anyone who believes in sustainable and people-centered development, this is essential reading.
- sai***@gmail.com

Consider the use of interactive infographics or data visualizations to present complex development data in a more accessible and engaging way. This could help readers quickly grasp the scale and impact of KOICA's projects, making the information more memorable and shareable.
- zim***@gmail.com

I have received very important and valuable information from MAGAZINE KOICA. MAGAZINE KOICA always presents us with inspiring and precious information. MAGAZINE KOICA's design and texture quality is amazing and wonderful, and it further piques my interest as a reader. I am always with you and wish you all the success in the future.
- seo***@gmail.com

Include a "Behind the Scenes" photo section showing KOICA teams at work and in the field. It will help readers feel more connected to the people making a difference!
- cam***@gmail.com

What stands out the most in MAGAZINE KOICA is its tone: respectful, sincere, and quietly powerful. It doesn't shout accomplishments—it gently shows them through the eyes of volunteers, partners, and beneficiaries. Every article is written with care, focusing on the dignity and voice of communities. I love how each edition explores themes like sustainability, youth empowerment, or climate action, showing how KOICA weaves these global issues into their fieldwork. It's also visually impressive—clean design, strong photography, and informative graphics that make complex projects easy to understand. This is a publication that leads with values and earns trust through transparency and thoughtful storytelling.
- sri***@gmail.com

One of the strongest sections in MAGAZINE KOICA is its in-depth look at education programs in developing countries. It's clear that KOICA approaches education as a human right, not a charity effort. Articles about building schools, teacher training, and scholarship programs show how sustainable systems are being created—not just temporary solutions. The magazine also recognizes the challenges: lack of infrastructure, language barriers, and regional inequalities. But instead of portraying helplessness, it highlights resilience and partnership. I loved reading about students who've returned to their communities as educators—it's a beautiful cycle of growth. KOICA's work in education doesn't just build classrooms, it builds futures.
- asy***@gmail.com

Consider incorporating a "Then & Now" visual feature showcasing the transformation brought about by specific KOICA projects over time. Side-by-side photos or short videos could powerfully illustrate the tangible impact and long term sustainability of KOICA's efforts.
- zin***@gmail.com

We gladly welcome your feedback

Let us know what you think of MAGAZINE KOICA VOL.7. We will listen to what you have to say and try to improve MAGAZINE KOICA accordingly. Readers whose letters are published in VOL.8 will also receive a gift.

*** Send your mail to: press@koica.go.kr**
*** Letters may be edited for length and clarity.**



• The closure of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is expected to cause disruptions to plans to protect the world's vulnerable populations. The photo shows bags of flour being transported by the USAID as foreign aid.

Global trends in development cooperation
What's happening around the world?

The closure of USAID: U.S. aid gap becomes real

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been officially shut down. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced in a statement titled "Making Foreign Aid Great Again" that the United States would officially suspend all foreign aid provided through USAID, effective July 1. "Previous aid efforts have failed," he said. "From now on, we will focus on mutual prosperity through trade with recipient countries." American political leaders and international development cooperation experts immediately voiced their opposition to the measure. Former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama also spoke out in unison to criticize the Trump administration's decision. Bush said, "Foreign aid is a good thing and also serves our national interest," while Obama strongly criticized the dismantling of USAID, calling it "a colossal mistake."

Global cooperation experts from UN agencies noted that "USAID accounts for 40% of the funding required to protect the world's vulnerable populations" and warned that "the absence of USAID will pose a severe threat to areas experiencing disasters, climate crises, and poverty." "The Lancet," a renowned medical journal, has projected that the closure of USAID could result in the deaths of 14 million people by 2030, including 4.5 million children.

With this measure, USAID, which was established 64 years ago, has disappeared into history. It has been incorporated into the U.S. Department of State, and the vacated USAID building will be used as the FBI headquarters.

UNFPA: Low birth rates, a phenomenon caused not by 'not wanting to have children,' but by 'not being able to'

A UN report has found that most adult men and women are not having children because they are "unable to," not because they are "choosing not to" do so. On June 10 (local time), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) announced these findings through its 2025 State of World Population report. The report stated that, based on a survey of 14,000 adult men and women in 14 countries, including Korea and the United States, the main reasons adults are unable to have as many children as they want are economic and social factors such as excessive childcare costs, high housing prices, unstable jobs, and global uncertainty. "This research proves that low birth rates are not due to 'voluntary disfavor,' but rather because it is difficult to choose childbirth and parenting," said Dr. Natalia Kanem of UNFPA, who led the study. "To solve the problem, the priority should be to create an environment where having children is possible, such as paid parental leave and making childcare costs more affordable."



• More and more men and women are not able to have children due to excessive childcare costs and soaring housing prices.

WFP: 13 countries designated as 'Hunger Hotspots': "Urgent need for international assistance"

Thirteen countries, including Gaza, Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti, and Mali, have been designated as "Hunger Hotspots," with a high likelihood of experiencing extreme hunger that threatens the survival of the nation. On June 16 (local time), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) jointly released a report titled "Hunger Hotspots," warning that "unless urgent and extraordinary measures are taken within the next five months in these regions, two out of every 10,000 people in the affected areas will die each day from direct starvation, malnutrition, or related diseases." It is also predicted that 20% of the entire population will suffer from extreme hunger in these countries, and that 30% of them will be children. "Hunger Hotspots are mostly caused by climate change and the resulting migration or natural disasters, conflict, and economic collapse," the international organizations emphasized. "Urgent support from the international community is needed to save those affected."



• The World Food Programme has stressed that special measures must be taken to help the 13 'Hunger Hotspots.'

WHO: 'PHEIC for mpox' again

The World Health Organization (WHO) has re-declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) following the outbreak of the zoonotic disease mpox (also known as monkeypox). PHEIC is the highest level of alert issued by WHO for health threats and is declared when there is a potential for global spread. The PHEIC for mpox was declared last August when the disease spread to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighboring countries in Africa. Since the beginning of this year, it has been spreading again, with a surge in cases centered in Sierra Leone. Mpox was initially known to spread through human-animal contact, but recently, cases of human-to-human transmission have been increasing. WHO and other international health experts have warned that a more robust surveillance system is urgently needed to prevent mpox from developing into a destructive epidemic like Ebola or COVID-19.



• The World Health Organization has warned against global spread of mpox.

UN: 3rd UNOC held - "From plunder to protection'

On June 9, at the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) held over five days in Nice, France, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said, "The deep sea is not a 'new continent.' It is time to see the ocean not as a target for plunder, but as a subject for protection." Secretary-General Guterres's remarks are interpreted as an expression of opposition to "deep-sea resource mining" advocated by U.S. President Donald Trump since last April, and as an appeal to countries around the world to participate in the ratification of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) treaty. The BBNJ is an international agreement that designates 30% of the world's high seas as protected areas, and it will take effect once ratified by 60 countries worldwide. As of now, 50 countries have ratified the agreement. Meanwhile, the Korean government has expressed its intention to co-host the 4th UNOC with Chile in 2028.



• There is a growing sentiment among major nations that oceans must be protected.

UNFCCC: AICA Awards to support developing countries in responding to climate change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and KOICA launched the AI for Climate Action Award in June to support least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) in responding to climate change. The AICA Awards seek innovative AI solutions for climate change response in the fields of agriculture, energy, water, waste, and early warning systems. KOICA is co-hosting it as part of the "Climate Future Partnership," established with the UNFCCC during the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UNFCCC held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on November 19 last year (local time).



• The official poster for 'AI for Climate Action Award,' jointly run by KOICA and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The final winner will have the opportunity to present their project in person at the COP30 to the UNFCCC, which will be held in Belém, Brazil, this November. More details are available on the official website: aica.awardsplatform.com

Special contribution by Lee Ji-eun, head of the Department of Central Asian studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

Korea and Central Asia - toward a coalition of middle powers aiming for peace and shared prosperity in Eurasia

Diplomatic relations between Korea and the five Central Asian countries, established in 1991, have now surpassed 30 years, and as of 2025, as many as 150,000 Central Asians have settled in and become part of Korean society. What a closely connected region it is! Let's examine the political, economic, and diplomatic significance that Central Asia holds for Korea today, and explore the kind of future-oriented relationship Korea and Central Asia should pursue going forward.

Heart of Eurasia, rich in energy resources

Central Asia is a region made up of five countries whose names end with "-stan"—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—all of which were formerly part of the Soviet Union. As its name suggests, Central Asia is located at the very heart of the Eurasian continent, bordered by Russia to the north, India to the south, Europe to the west, and China to the east, which gives it the advantage of being connected in all directions. Thanks to this, Central Asia has been a region of prosperity and convergence, where civilizations and goods have flowed since ancient times. Today, historic Silk Road hub cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva are emerging as new blue oceans for tourism.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Central Asia has been highly valued for its strategic importance in terms of both resources and population. The region is a treasure trove of energy and mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, uranium, lithium, rare metals, and rare earth elements, and its young population is rapidly increasing. As of 2025, the average age of people in Central Asia is 26.7 years, and with about one million births per year in recent years, the population of Central Asia is expected to exceed 100 million by 2050. The abundance of resources, young labor force, and geographic connectivity are the main reasons why Central Asia is attracting significant interest from the world's major powers today. Korea, as an industrial powerhouse, has also been pursuing strategic partnerships with the resource-rich countries of Central Asia and promoting cooperation in a wide range of fields.

30 years of friendship: achievements and challenges in Korea-Central Asia diplomatic relations

Diplomatic relations between Korea and the five Central Asian countries, which began with their independence in the early 1990s, marked their 30th anniversary in 2024. Past Korean governments have consistently maintained cooperation with Central Asia through various strategies and initiatives, such as the Northern Policy, resource diplomacy, the Eurasia Initiative, the New Northern Policy, and the K-Silk Road.

The most recent summit held in June 2024 between Korea and Central Asia involved resource-rich countries such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. The discussions specifically focused on energy resource development, transportation and logistics infrastructure construction, and cooperation in information and communication technology (ICT).

Energy and mineral resources represent the most significant areas of cooperation between Korea and the three Central Asian countries. It is no exaggeration to say that Korea's comprehensive engagement in Central Asia was motivated by the region's abundant energy and mineral resources. Moreover, as competition among countries for critical mineral resources has intensified recently, it is essential for the Korean government to prioritize the stable establishment of supply chains. In this context, the signing of a critical minerals supply chain partnership with Kazakhstan—including cooperation on lithium—and the agreement for a desulfurization facility at the Galkynysh gas field in Turkmenistan, one of the world's top five gas fields, are expected to play a positive role in securing a stable resource supply chain for Korea in the future.

Paving path for future-oriented cooperation

Strengthening economic and trade cooperation with Central Asia holds significant meaning for the Korean economy in various aspects. First and foremost, the focus is on expanding the scope of the Korean economy. Korea has long grappled with the challenge of diversifying its overseas markets. This means that, in addition to its current trade partners such as China, Japan, and the United States, it is imperative for Korea to seek new economic cooperation partners. Central Asia is a region rich in resources and characterized by a youthful population, positioning itself as a promising consumer market with significant growth potential. In addition, due to Central Asia's location at the heart of the Eurasian continent, Korean companies can leverage the region's logistics network as a strategic hub to connect the European and Asian markets.

There is significant potential for cooperation with Central Asian countries to enhance Korea's energy security. As is widely recognized, Korea is heavily reliant on imports of mineral resources, including uranium and rare earth elements. Moreover, Korea's supply chains are excessively concentrated in specific countries. If Korea can secure a stable supply of essential mineral resources from Central Asia, it will significantly diversify the country's resource supply chains and contribute to greater economic stability. Meanwhile, the construction of smart cities in rapidly growing Central Asian urban areas, along with infrastructure projects such as telecommunications, roads, power grids, and ICT cooperation present a significant opportunity for Korean technology to establish itself as the standard in Central Asia.

Key future agendas for Korea-Central Asia relations

So far, Korea's diplomacy with Central Asia has largely unfolded within the frameworks of bilateral relations and multilateral platforms. Among these, multilateral diplomacy has focused on the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum, which was launched in 2007. At that time, since the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum was the only multilateral platform that brought together all five



Lee Ji-eun head of the Department of Central Asian Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

Central Asian countries, major neighboring powers closely watched Korea's policy toward Central Asia. The Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum, which initially commenced at the vice-ministerial level, has recently been elevated to the ministerial level. It now functions as a platform that facilitates regular high-level exchanges between Korea and Central Asia while promoting multilateral cooperation. However, given that presidential power is overwhelmingly strong in all five Central Asian countries, transitioning to a regular summit-level forum would enhance efficiency and momentum in selecting cooperation agendas and implementing policies between Korea and Central Asia in the future.

Meanwhile, during the tour of three Central Asian countries in 2024, a Korea-Central Asia five-nation summit was proposed, with plans for holding it next year. So, what should be discussed at the upcoming Korea—Central Asia summit? First of all, it is necessary to establish concrete and mutually beneficial action plans for energy cooperation. Above all, a sustainable partnership will only be possible if the plans include a win-win structure that both expands energy exports for each country and enhances Korea's energy security. In this context, the topic of "transition to a digital and green economy" can be considered an intriguing area of cooperation for both sides. Today, Central Asian countries have made digital innovation a key national priority for sustainable development, and in this process, Korea's technological expertise and experience are needed. In addition, the number of Central Asians coming to Korea has increased rapidly in recent years (reaching about 150,000 as of 2025). From a long-term perspective, it is now necessary to expand educational and cultural exchanges between Korea and Central Asia and to promote mutual understanding and cooperation between their peoples in order to ensure the sustainability and strengthening of their partnership.

Toward a coalition of middle powers aiming for peace and shared prosperity in Eurasia

Central Asian presidents all view South Korea as a model for their own nations. They trust Korea's path and hope to follow it. For this reason, Korea should avoid viewing Central Asia merely as a source of resources or an investment destination. Instead, in the long term, Korea has to embrace Central Asian countries as partners for mutual prosperity. Not only in energy, infrastructure, and technological cooperation, but also in political collaboration, people-to-people exchanges, and cultural exchange, it is essential to foster a relationship of trust based on mutual understanding across all areas. By strengthening its cooperative relationships with Central Asian countries, Korea can create new economic opportunities and further solidify its position in the global economy. For their part, Central Asian countries need to use cooperation with South Korea as a foundation for easier entry into the global market and to grow into reliable and responsible members of the international community.

In the midst of past, present, and future cooperation, relations with Central Asia will become even stronger going forward. Amid intensifying local conflicts and major power struggles in the global landscape, I hope that Korea and the Central Asian countries will grow into a central axis of solidarity among middle powers, pursuing peace and coexistence.

ODA Infographic

Central Asia at a glance

Central Asia is a geopolitical hub connecting Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, consisting of five countries: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. KOICA has established overseas offices in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, continuously implementing international development cooperation projects. With abundant natural resources, Central Asia also holds great future potential in the industrial sector. Here is an overview of this region of remarkable possibilities at a glance.

Reasons to Pay Attention to Central Asia

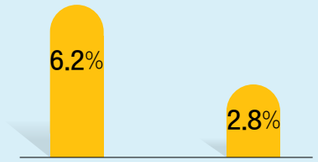
Young Population, Growing Economy

Average age **26.7** years

Percentage of Population Aged ≤30
50%
(0~14 years: 30%, 15~30 years: 20%)

Population Estimate for the Year 2050
100 million
Compared to 2025 (76 million)
30% ↑

Average GDP Growth Rate (2023)



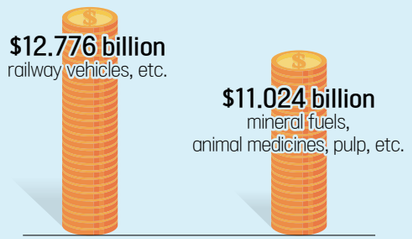
[Source: WB]

Abundant Natural Resources

Kazakhstan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
1st uranium production	**4th** natural gas reserves	**8th** gold production

[Source: WGC, WNA, Worldometer]

Trade with Korea (2021-2023)



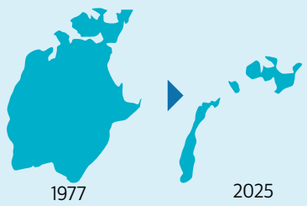
[Source: KITA, KOTRA]

Challenges for Central Asia

Digital Transformation through E-government

0.6937
Average E-government development index of the five countries in 2024
1st **Denmark** with 0.9847 / **4**th **Korea** with 0.9679
[Source: UN]

Environment (Desertification)



Aral Sea, the world's second-largest inland lake, decreased by **80**% over the past 40 years
[Source: NASA]

Current status of KOICA's Support for Central Asia

Central Asia project



Strengthening Capacity for Response to Infectious Diseases to Reduce Disease Burden in Uzbekistan (2022~2026/$14.15mil.)



Supporting of Foundation for the Modernized Horticultural Greenhouse in Tajikistan (2024~2029/$8.0mil.)



Development of National Centralized AMI System for Improving Energy System (2023~2026/$10.5mil.)

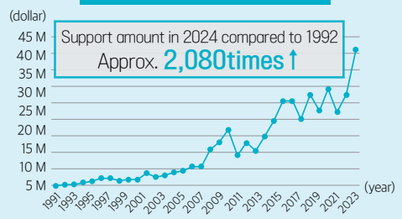


Establishment of Vocational Training Center in Urganch and National Qualification System Primarily in Tashkent VTC in Uzbekistan (2020~2026/$14.0mil.)



Project for Capacity Building of National Informatization for Digital Transformation in Kyrgyzstan(2024~2027/$7mil.)

Annual Support Scale



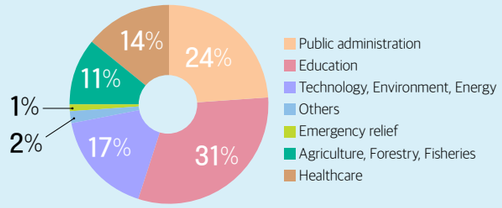
Cumulative total support amount approx. **$390 Million**

Ranking of Korea's Grant Aid by Country

Among the 30 member countries of the DAC, as of 2022

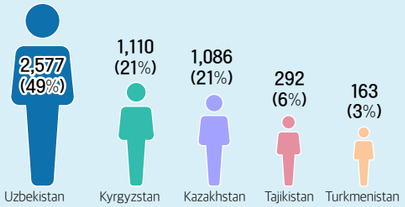
Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan
2nd	**5**th	**5**th

Support Project Ratio by Sector



Number of KOICA Training Program Participants

Cumulative total of 5,228 (from 1991 to 2024, persons)





• A chief nurse from Seoul National University Hospital providing post-cardiac surgery nursing training in the pediatric intensive care unit of the National Children's Medical Center in Uzbekistan

Strengthening Capacity for Response to Infectious Diseases to Reduce Disease Burden in Uzbekistan

Once with poor infrastructure, Uzbekistan becomes Central Asian medical powerhouse

In 2024 alone, about 5,000 children underwent surgery at the National Children's Medical Center in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. These were highly complex surgeries for conditions such as congenital heart defects and esophageal atresia, with most of the patients being infants less than one year old. Every time news came that a surgery had been successful, families who had waited anxiously broke into tears of joy. The moving stories of young children receiving new leases on life were reported throughout Uzbekistan, drawing widespread public attention.

This case received particular attention due to the insufficient healthcare systems in Central Asia. In fact, the National Children's Medical Center in Uzbekistan is the only specialized quaternary pediatric hospital in all of Central Asia, which has a population of over 76 million.

The only quaternary pediatric hospital in Central Asia

A "quaternary hospital," also known as a highly specialized hospital, refers to a medical facility equipped to treat serious illnesses and rare, intractable diseases—such as organ transplants, brain tumors, and congenital heart defects. Because extremely high levels of medical expertise and cutting-edge equipment are required, it is difficult for developing countries to establish even quaternary hospitals for adults. For this reason, it is quite rare worldwide for a developing country to have a quaternary hospital specializing in pediatrics, which requires additional specialized pediatric staff and equipment. According to a World Health Organization (WHO) survey, about 3 million newborns are born with congenital diseases each year, and half of them die without proper treatment. The child mortality rate in developing countries is 12 times higher than in developed countries. This is why the very existence of the National Children's Medical Center established in Uzbekistan is called a "miracle." Having opened its doors in 2020, this hospital is now in its sixth year of operation and is known as the first in Uzbekistan to provide a wide range of pediatric medical services within a single facility.

Approximately 5,000 pediatric patients undergo surgery at the National Children's Medical Center each year. Since its opening, more than 100,000 children have been treated at this hospital. One Uzbek medical official said, "Before this hospital was established, most people had to give up on treatment unless they were among the very few wealthy enough to seek care abroad. The fact that ordinary children can now receive treatment is a miracle."

All-out support for hospital operations and infectious disease response

Behind this "miracle" in Uzbekistan's healthcare sector stood South Korea. It is already well known in Uzbekistan that Korea built the country's only children's hospital, which is also the only pediatric hospital of its kind in Central Asia. This is because Uzbekistan's president and its government officials never fail to express their gratitude for Korea's support in healthcare—including the National Children's Medical Center—at official events such as the United Nations General Assembly and summits. There was even an occasion when the family of a young patient sent a letter of gratitude addressed directly to "the Republic of Korea."



• Uzbekistan's medical staff assessing environmental hazards inside their hospital



• The Research Institute of Virology of the Republic of Uzbekistan was designated as the first inpatient treatment facility for COVID-19 patients in 2021. KOICA staff who supported the research institute are posing together with the institute officials.

The National Children's Medical Center in Uzbekistan is the result of a "comprehensive medical system support" project jointly carried out by KOICA, the EDCF (Economic Development Cooperation Fund) of the Korea Eximbank under the Ministry of Economy and Finance, which primarily handles concessional loans, and KOFIH (Korea Foundation for International Healthcare) under the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

KOICA took charge of strengthening the hospital's core medical capabilities. KOICA was responsible for enhancing the capacity of medical staff, establishing hospital operation protocols, and setting up a clinical guideline simulation training center to ensure that the newly built hospital could actually provide advanced medical services. Local doctors and nurses were invited to Korea to receive training at institutions such as Seoul National University Hospital, and Korean medical experts were also dispatched to Uzbekistan to provide on-site training. When specific issues such as infectious diseases arose, remote meetings were also conducted using platforms like Zoom.

KOICA did not just assist with the operation of the National Children's Medical Center. During the COVID-19 pandemic, KOICA also made every effort to support Uzbekistan's response to infectious diseases. From 2020 to the present endemic phase, KOICA has continued to provide unwavering support for both direct responses to infectious diseases and the improvement of infectious disease response systems.

Severe shortage of medical personnel and outdated equipment… Korea changed everything

KOICA stepped in to help Uzbekistan because its healthcare system still retained elements from the Soviet era. In socialist systems such as the former Soviet Union, healthcare was provided free of charge to everyone, but the overall quality of medical services declined due to delays in the introduction of rapidly advancing new medicines and medical equipment. As a result, the impact during the COVID-19 pandemic was inevitably severe. While responding to the infectious disease, most regular healthcare services were almost completely halted.

While KOICA provided comprehensive support for infectious disease response, its most important goal was to strengthen local response capacity. Leading examples include: ▲Computerization of epidemiological management systems ▲Support for the latest equipment in research and clinical fields ▲Consulting on infectious disease management and response systems ▲Capacity building for healthcare personnel.

KOICA improved systems at institutions such as the Research Institute of Virology, which is responsible for infectious disease response under the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan, and also provided training for medical staff while also supplying equipment. Leading experts from organizations such as the International Vaccine Institute and Yonsei University participated in this process.

A KOICA official said, "Local response capacity was so limited that even the government's epidemiological tracking system was being managed manually." In response, KOICA actively introduced computerized systems and trained relevant personnel to enhance epidemiological tracking and management capabilities. Subsequently, modern equipment was provided to diagnostic laboratories, improving both clinical and research capacities. Kurbanov Botirjon, Deputy Chairman of the Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee, said, "Through the consulting and training provided by KOICA, we were able to completely restructure our infectious disease response system."

KOICA's support continues even after the end of the pandemic. Although the COVID-19 crisis has ended, there is always the possibility of future health emergencies, such as new infectious diseases. "Since infectious diseases know no borders, a crisis in developing countries can become a crisis not only for Korea but for the entire world," a KOICA official said. "We will continue to cooperate with Uzbekistan, an important partner in our government's special strategic partnership, for our shared prosperity."

Mini Interview 1

"Expert exchanges have greatly improved response to infectious diseases"



Kurbanov Botirjon Jurabayevich, Deputy Chairman of the Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee

Q Please briefly introduce yourself.

My name is Kurbanov Botirjon Jurabayevich, and I am currently serving as the deputy chairman of the Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee (SEWPHC) in Uzbekistan. SEWPHC is an agency under the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan that oversees disease prevention and control, including infectious diseases, as well as research, education, and epidemiological investigations necessary for effective disease response. At the time I worked with KOICA, I also served as the project manager.

One of SEWPHC's most important missions is to implement hygiene and quarantine measures to promote public health. The Committee establishes and manages health and hygiene regulations and strives to raise public health awareness. In this process, it has worked closely with KOICA.

Q What kind of cooperation did you carry out with KOICA?

A prime example is the "Strengthening Capacity for Response to Infectious Diseases to Reduce Disease Burden in Uzbekistan." We established a comprehensive response system in cooperation with Korean universities, specialized institutions, and companies. We evaluated the existing infectious disease response system, identified priority tasks, and introduced a new infectious disease response system. We also held seminars and training sessions to develop professionals to perform these tasks. We digitized all related systems and, during this process, obtained the necessary international certifications with the help and training provided by Korea.

Q What have you accomplished so far?

Relevant regulations were rapidly improved, and we were able to establish a preparedness system for emergencies. In addition, the efficiency of research laboratories increased, enabling us to respond more reliably. Although it is still in progress, one of the most anticipated outcomes is the enactment of a quarantine law. This will establish a legal framework for managing infectious diseases. Currently, with support from Korea, we are establishing an international quarantine cooperation system in line with the International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as community-based infrastructure and systems to support it. Training in Korea and education from Korean experts have been a great help in this process.

Q How did you receive support?

By observing how the quarantine law operates and functions in practice, we were able to quickly determine the direction for enacting legislation suited to Uzbekistan's circumstances. Through training programs in Korea, the capacity of decision-makers who observed the field firsthand was greatly enhanced, which made the process much smoother. As a consensus was formed on the need to raise the level of infectious disease management to global standards, we were also able to proactively pursue preparations for other international certifications. During this process, our sense of solidarity with Korea grew much stronger.

Q A sense of solidarity?

Thanks to the KOICA officials and Korean experts who actively supported us with a friendly attitude, we felt a strong sense of solidarity throughout the entire process of working with KOICA. In particular, KOICA's support was unique compared to that of other countries or international organizations, as it did not focus on just a limited area but took a comprehensive approach to achieving the set goals. As we received practical support and a sustainable system was established locally, our sense of gratitude and solidarity naturally grew stronger.

Q What do you expect from future cooperation with KOICA?

While we have continuously received support through ongoing cooperation, the exchange of relevant experts has been the greatest source of strength. I hope that the exchange of experts will continue in the future as well. In particular, I believe that the epidemiological management guidelines for infectious diseases developed through multiple expert exchanges are a significant achievement that has greatly improved Uzbekistan's ability to respond to and manage infectious diseases.

I am currently preparing a proposal in hopes that KOICA's support will continue in the future. I hope that exchanges and support, along with cooperation in research, will continue so that young professionals in the field can develop their skills and capabilities together.

Mini Interview 2

“With systematic support, KOICA is our key partner”



Erkin Musabaev, Director of the Uzbekistan Research Institute of Virology

Q Please briefly introduce yourself.
I am Erkin Musabaev, director of the Uzbekistan Research Institute of Virology under the Ministry of Health. In 2021, the institute was designated as the first institution in Uzbekistan for the hospitalization and treatment of COVID-19 patients. From 2020 to April 2021, I took part in the treatment of severe COVID-19 cases. During this period, I also conducted approximately 200 PCR tests per day.

Q What was the local situation in Uzbekistan during the COVID-19 pandemic?
The most difficult challenge was the severe shortage of diagnostic equipment. Basically, the main problems were the lack of specialized knowledge about the prevention and treatment of COVID-19, as well as the absence of hospitals dedicated to infectious diseases. Even general hospitals that were not specialized in infectious diseases had to serve as infectious disease hospitals, which put the entire healthcare system of Uzbekistan at risk of collapse. Due to this situation, patients with general or chronic diseases who needed emergency treatment were unable to receive medical services.

Q What projects did you carry out with KOICA at that time?
From 2020 to 2021, the Research Institute of Virology implemented a project to strengthen infectious disease response capabilities in cooperation with KOICA. The institute established a comprehensive medical system for the prevention, treatment, and diagnosis of infectious diseases. The advanced equipment and technology provided by KOICA, as well as the training for medical staff, were extremely helpful. It is no exaggeration to say that this brought about a fundamental change in how Uzbekistan as a whole responded to the pandemic.

Q Can you talk about what happened specifically?
At that time in Uzbekistan, due to excessive workloads, almost all pieces of medical equipment in clinical settings and laboratories were worn out. If KOICA had not provided large-scale equipment support in a timely manner, the Research Institute of Virology would not have been able to withstand the situation for long and would have had to cease operations.
That is why I am deeply grateful to KOICA. Thanks to the provision of the latest diagnostic and research equipment, our institute was able to avoid collapse and significantly strengthen its material and technical capabilities. I can assure you that KOICA’s support played a decisive role in Uzbekistan’s response to the pandemic.

Q Are there any particular reasons why your cooperation with KOICA stands out, even though there was support from other countries as well?
KOICA’s assistance was the only one that provided fundamental help from a systematic perspective. KOICA accurately understood what we needed most urgently and provided support accordingly. With KOICA’s help, our institute was able to continue essential functions in both the clinical and research stages without having to shut them down.

Q What role did the equipment and training provided by KOICA play?
The equipment began to function perfectly on site in 2022, and as a result, the endoscopy and radiology departments were newly established. With these new departments, our institute’s diagnostic and treatment capabilities improved dramatically.

Q What stands out the most from your collaboration with KOICA?
It is the opening of the endoscopy and radiology departments. With the creation of these departments, the level of medical services for infectious disease patients advanced to an entirely new level. With the introduction of modern endoscopic and imaging diagnostic techniques and the enhancement of laboratory capabilities, much more precise diagnoses became possible. For example, we were able to detect complications and provide customized treatments. As a result, the treatment success rate increased dramatically, and patients’ clinical outcomes improved significantly.

Q Do you have any message you would like to convey to KOICA and Korea?
KOICA is our key partner. By learning from Korea’s world-class best practices in healthcare, we are striving to elevate Uzbekistan’s infectious disease response capabilities to a global level. Once again, I would like to express my gratitude for KOICA’s support.



• Right: Gilmanov Anvar, CEO of Nura Group, who founded the company after graduating from the Tashkent Vocational Training Center built by KOICA. Bottom left: Anvar during his time as a trainee at the KOICA-built training center.

Uzbekistan Vocational Training Center Construction Project

Skilled workers nurture dreams with Korea’s help

Gilmanov Anvar, CEO of the Uzbek power sector company Nura Group, is a 2015 graduate of the Tashkent Vocational Training Center supported by KOICA. After graduation, he founded a company specializing in power infrastructure construction and voltage equipment supply. Although he faced initial management challenges, he says that thanks to the modern technology and management knowledge gained at the vocational training center, he was able to grow the company rapidly. Currently, Nura Group has grown into a company with more than 50 employees, many of whom are also graduates of the KOICA vocational training center. Now, CEO Gilmanov serves as a mentor, inspiring the youth of Uzbekistan to pursue their dreams.

KOICA’s Vocational Training Center Project driving economic growth in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is a “young country,” with people under the age of 30 accounting for 54% of the total population. However, many young people struggle to find suitable jobs. Although Uzbekistan’s official unemployment rate is reported to be around 8%, local experts believe that due to weaknesses in national statistics, more than 20% of the unemployed population is not reflected in the data. In reality, the unemployment rate is estimated to be around 30%.
In response to this situation, the Uzbek government is striving to cultivate high-quality industrial manpower to enhance industrial competitiveness, improve employment rates, and promote economic growth. This is also why KOICA has been implementing vocational training center construction projects since 2007, nurturing young talent for nearly 20 years.
KOICA began with Tashkent in 2012, followed by Samarkand (2016), Shakhris-

abz (2018), and Fergana (2021). Currently, KOICA is constructing its fifth vocational training center in Urgench, which is scheduled for completion in 2025. Vocational training centers offer a variety of educational programs such as automobile, electrical, IT, sewing, and beauty, tailored to the characteristics of regional industries and labor markets. They also provide hands-on industry experience through partnerships with local companies. As a result, the vocational training centers have trained over 11,000 skilled talents, achieving an overall graduate employment rate of 92% and a 97% satisfaction rate among employing companies.

Vocational training centers reflecting regional characteristics, visited and highly praised by the President of Uzbekistan

Each vocational training center operates according to regional characteristics. The Tashkent Vocational Training Center was the first to be established and currently plays a central role in advancing Uzbekistan's vocational training system. The Samarkand Vocational Training Center is receiving support from Keimyung College University for the modernization of its curriculum and strengthening of operational capacity through KOICA's civil society cooperation project. The newly established departments of Mechanical Engineering and Computer Graphics have become popular at the center. The Shakhrisabz Vocational Training Center was the first to design specialized education programs focused on women's employment, such as garment manufacturing and beauty. As a result, the proportion of female and disabled trainees has steadily increased, achieving notable success in the inclusion of vulnerable groups. The Fergana Vocational Training Center was successfully established despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and it currently offers shipbuilding education through a collaboration between Ulsan City and Hyundai Heavy Industries. The Urgench Vocational Training Center, scheduled to open in 2025, plans to include hotel and tourism programs, considering the nearby tourist area of Khiva.

KOICA's vocational training center project has been highly praised by the Uzbek government and the international community. Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited the construction site of the Urgench Vocational Training Center on May 2, following his visit to the Fergana Vocational Training Center in 2022. And he emphasized the importance of cooperation with Korea in talent development, saying, "Quality vocational training is the foundation of industrialization and national development." In 2023, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also recognized KOICA's Vocational Training Center project as an exemplary case of development cooperation.

Fostering world-class Uzbek technical talent through comprehensive vocational training support

In addition to establishing vocational training centers, KOICA has also worked to lay policy and institutional foundations by cooperating with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction to introduce the country's first national technical qualification examination. KOICA has piloted the establishment of a qualification examination system in three technical fields - automotive maintenance, general welding, and electrical equipment installation and repair - to enable industrial talent to have their technical skills objectively certified. The first examination was conducted this year, and certificates were awarded to the successful candidates at the end of June.

"I used to work in market sales, but after learning electrical and electronic skills at the vocational training center established by KOICA, I began dreaming of becoming the top electrical technician in Shahrisabz," said Dilmurodov Lazizbek, a graduate of the Shahrisabz Vocational Training Center and the first recipient of Uzbekistan's national technical qualification certificate.



• Local trainees receiving electrical wiring training at the Fergana Vocational Training Center built by KOICA



• A female trainee learning garment manufacturing at the Fergana Vocational Training Center





• The site of the national technical qualification examination, held for the first time in Uzbekistan in May-June with support from KOICA

"Through the national technical qualification certificate, I expect to have my skills recognized not only in Uzbekistan but also in overseas markets, and I feel that I am now closer to my dream."

In addition, KOICA views the cultivation of excellent teachers as crucial for improving the quality of education in the future, so it is also proceeding with the construction of a teacher training center.

"The reason KOICA's vocational training centers established across Uzbekistan have been actively nurturing technical talent and receiving recognition for their achievements lies in the continuous support and proactive participation of the Uzbek government," said Shin Myung-seop, Director of the KOICA Uzbekistan Office. "KOICA will continue to provide multifaceted support so that it can help Uzbek technical talents find jobs or start businesses locally, and also have them recognized as professional technical experts who are in demand

Mini Interview

"90% employment rate, positive impact on national economy"



Abdullayev Hakimjon, Director of the Vocational Training Department, Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction

Q How was vocational training conducted in Uzbekistan before the establishment of KOICA vocational training centers?

There were few opportunities for vocational training itself. In particular, people who graduated from regular schools but could not find jobs needed vocational training, but such an environment was lacking. Until 2011, there was only one vocational training center under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction that could accommodate more than 1,000 trainees, and it is estimated that only about 0.5% of the vocational training actually matched the skills demanded by real businesses.

Q What changes have occurred since the establishment of KOICA vocational training centers?

More than 13,000 skilled individuals have found employment so far. That is to say, over 3,700 companies have benefited by acquiring talented professionals. The introduction of a modern and effective vocational training system in Uzbekistan holds significance beyond merely improving employment rates. KOICA established the vocational training centers and transferred their operation to the Uzbekistan Ministry of Employment, facilitating knowledge transfer regarding the operation and management of the centers. As a result, more than 80 short-term vocational training centers have been created. Every year, more than 100,000 skilled technical personnel are produced here, and their positive impact on Uzbekistan's economy is truly tremendous.

Q How are the employment rates and overall performance of graduates from the four currently operating vocational training centers?

The average employment rate of the four vocational training centers is about 90%, which is very high. Many have found jobs in Korea or returned afterward to settle locally by utilizing their experience. Many students have also succeeded in starting businesses based on their skills and maintaining sustainable operations. In addition to employment, there have been numerous accomplishments in international technical competitions. Uzbekistan has consistently produced award winners at various prestigious international skills competitions, including the 2022 EuroSkills, the 2022 WorldSkills Special Edition, the 2023 Abu Dhabi WorldSkills Asia Competition, the WorldSkills International Competition, and the 2024 Central Asia WorldSkills Friendship Competition.

Q What would you like to say to KOICA?

I would like to express my gratitude for the hard work of KOICA volunteers. On-site education managers all say that KOICA volunteers played a significant role in the establishment and operation of the vocational training centers. I sincerely thank the KOICA volunteers who have worked hard to create and implement an excellent project, ensuring that its outcomes effectively take root in the local context. K



• The Romit substation, built through the first-phase power grid project

Power Supply Project Phase-Ⅱ in Romit, Tajikistan

‘Smart power’ flows through Central Asia

A stable power supply is the driving force behind sustainable economic growth. Electricity plays a key role in operating factory machinery and maintaining quality of life for residents. Central Asia has an underdeveloped electricity market. Many areas still use aging power plants and transmission facilities built during the Soviet era, and the technical capacity needed for effective power management is also insufficient. At one time, the power grids of Central Asian countries were interconnected as a single network, but after declaring independence, each country began operating its own system separately, resulting in a decline in both the efficiency and stability of power supply. KOICA has been steadily supporting power development cooperation in Central Asia, contributing to regional economic growth. The main target countries are Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Tajikistan: daily lives of residents changing

Tajikistan is a landlocked country where most of the territory is mountainous. Based on its abundant water resources, hydropower accounts for the majority of its electricity production. The problem is that most water resources freeze during the severe cold of winter, leading to a shortage in electricity production, and even this limited supply does not effectively reach remote areas far from major cities. In mountainous regions, the cost of building power supply networks is particularly high, placing a significant burden on the government to improve the infrastructure.

Since 2017, KOICA has been supporting the construction of power infrastructure in Tajikistan. From 2017 to 2021, KOICA invested approximately $6 million (about 8.5 billion won) to carry out the first-phase power development project in nine villages of Romit District, Vahdat City. These villages, located 60 kilometers from the capital city, Dushanbe, had substations and transmission lines mostly built during the Soviet era that had become outdated. Frequent breakdowns forced residents to endure daily inconveniences.

KOICA built two new transmission towers and one substation, while repairing existing transmission towers and constructing new distribution lines. At the time, there was a high level of interest from residents in the project. This was driven by the expectation that if a stable supply of quality electricity is ensured, the Romit District’s river basin could be developed into a tourism promotion zone, and competitive industrial infrastructure, such as manufacturing plants, could also be established. KOICA provided local power engineers with capacity-building training and shared knowhow on transmission and distribution technology so that residents could manage and operate the electricity system on their own.

As a result of the first phase of the project, an environment was established in the village where energy can be supplied reliably throughout the year.

Consequently, the lives of the residents have become much more convenient. With the reduction in fuel costs, the use of heating during winter has increased, and residents are now able to charge their mobile phones and watch TV, thereby improving their access to information. The ability to store food in refrigerators has led to an increase in the number of schools providing meals. Housewives now use washing machines, refrigerators, and ovens in their daily lives, reducing the burden of cooking and housework. Additionally, a trout farm using the power grid has opened, contributing to the revitalization of the local economy.

Based on the results of the first phase, KOICA has been implementing the second phase of the project since 2023, expanding the number of target villages. A total of 65 kilometers of 10kV distribution lines will be constructed from the Romit substation in Vahdat, Tajikistan, to supply electricity to 14 nearby villages. About 5,000 residents living in mountainous areas across steep cliff valleys are expected to receive reliable electricity.

To meet the increased demand for electricity, a new substation will also be built in the Yavroz area. The Romit substation, which was supported during the first phase, will also be connected to the new Yavroz substation, and the transmission lines will be redundantly installed to ensure a continuous power supply even during outages.



• A KOICA staff member is inspecting the Romit substation, which was established through the first phase of the power grid project, in May.

The project is scheduled to run until 2026, with a total budget of $14 million (approximately ₩19.9 billion).

In the second half of this year, 10 officials responsible for policymaking in the power sector and for the construction and operation of power facilities in Tajikistan will be invited to Seoul to participate in a training program at the KEPCO Human Resources Development Institute. Next year, technical training will be provided in Tajikistan for 25 field staff from transmission and distribution companies, as well as substation workers. Forty representatives from local villages that will newly receive electricity will also participate in safety training.

Kyrgyzstan to establish ‘Centralized Advanced Metering Infrastructure System’ by 2026

Most of the power facilities in Kyrgyzstan were installed between the 1960s and 1980s, and the infrastructure has become outdated. Frequent breakdowns and significant power losses were common, and the quality of the electricity produced was low. Power losses accounted for up to 20% of total electricity, which is four times higher than that of advanced countries (5%).

In particular, the absence of a power management system led to inefficiencies in electricity usage. To monitor electricity usage, people had to manually check meter readings one by one, and there was no integrated system to track power consumption, making it difficult to collect and manage data.

In response, since the end of 2023, KOICA has been carrying out a project to establish a Centralized AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) System* capable of managing all residential and commercial electricity in Kyrgyzstan, with a total budget of $10.5 million (approximately ₩14.92 billion). The Korea Energy Economics Institute and KT are also participating as partners. In May, the Centralized AMI System capable of accommodating up to 1.5 million smart meters across Kyrgyzstan was completed. By integrating newly introduced meters and various models of existing meters, a foundation has been established for the efficient operation and management of data in the distribution sector.

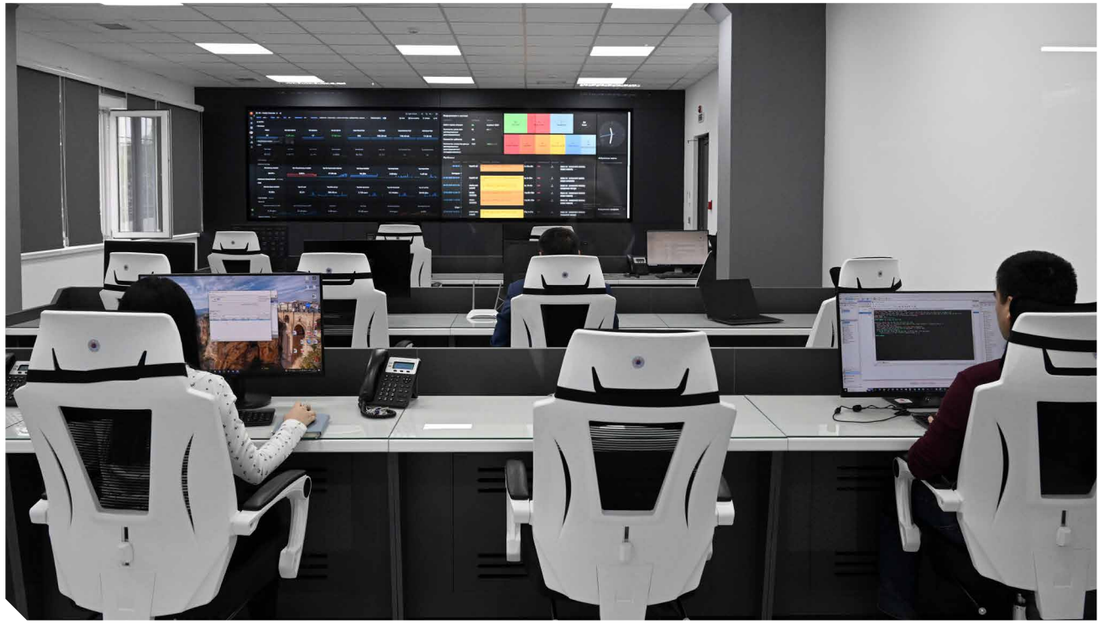


• CAS (Centralized AMI System) Operation Center established in Kyrgyzstan

By the end of 2026, the project team will provide a total of 10,779 smart meters to the Kyrgyzstan government and will begin full-scale ‘ICT capacity-building training’ to enable the government to operate the system independently.

For one year, the Centralized AMI System will be operated jointly while practical knowledge on system inspections and troubleshooting will be shared. Maintenance support will also be provided for two years for IT systems, including operation center facilities, servers, storage, and network equipment. A KOICA official said, “In the long term, this project is expected to promote efficiency and digitalization in the energy sector as part of Kyrgyzstan’s ‘2018—2040 National Development Strategy’ and increase public convenience in electricity use.”

* Project to establish a Centralized Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System for improving the national energy system



• Monitoring room of the G-Cloud Center, Kyrgyzstan's first integrated government data center

Modernization and Capacity Development of the Advanced "Administrative Information Sharing and Interoperability System" in Kyrgyzstan

"Korean-style" e-government blossoms in Central Asia

Kyrgyzstan has lagged behind other Central Asian countries in adopting e-government. In Korea, a few clicks are enough to handle paperwork, but here, people have to visit each issuing agency in person, and even a minor mistake along the way means starting over and getting all the documents reissued from the beginning.

The KOICA Kyrgyzstan Office recognized the difficulties faced by local residents and became convinced that introducing Korea's advanced digital technology and efficient administrative system - moving beyond e-government and toward digital government - would greatly benefit the country.

Kyrgyzstan enters the era of e-government

The "Modernization and Capacity Development of the Advanced 'Administrative Information Sharing and Interoperability System' in Kyrgyzstan" project, carried out from 2020 to 2025, was actively led and promoted by the KOICA Kyrgyzstan Office. At that time, since the Kyrgyzstan government was also aware of the inconveniences faced by its citizens, KOICA was able to easily convince it of the need to adopt e-government. KOICA developed electronic civil service applications while simultaneously collaborating with the World Bank and the Kyrgyzstan government on parts of the project. The "Modernization and Capacity Development of the Advanced 'Administrative Information Sharing and Interoperability System' in Kyrgyzstan" project is, in short, Kyrgyzstan's e-government development initiative. Simply put, it is a project designed to streamline Kyrgyzstan's administrative processes - which were done in an analog way - by digitalizing them in the same way as in Korea. The purpose of this project is to carry out a comprehensive reform - from developing the administrative system and electronic system to improving the way public officials work - so that the people of Kyrgyzstan can handle various administrative tasks efficiently and easily.

The process was not easy. Building e-government wasn't simply about introducing electronic systems; it also involved changing the approach and attitudes toward their work by the public officials handling the tasks. KOICA also had to establish a system for continuous communication among officials from related government departments; and building top-tier servers capable of handling many simultaneous users without interruption was another hurdle to overcome. Pyo Kyung-joo, Deputy Director of the KOICA Kyrgyzstan Office, said, "Although it was not an easy task, the KOICA office and officials from the Kyrgyzstan government were united in their determination to see it through to the very end."

The KOICA Kyrgyzstan Office made a dedicated effort to ensure that local government officials fully understood the project and actively participated from the design stage through to implementation. If Korean experts were to take charge of the entire process, the project could progress more quickly, but it might lead to difficulties in maintenance and upkeep later on. Therefore, the KOICA Kyrgyzstan Office made sure to have interpreters present at every step, even if it meant working significantly longer hours, to carefully convey all relevant information to the local staff.

Overcoming discord between government agencies was another major challenge. The project faced multiple delays when another ministry suddenly announced it would use the building originally designated for the data cloud center. It was also a long and arduous process to consolidate scattered information from various government ministries, such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, into a single unified system.

Enhancing resident convenience and eliminating blind spots in welfare

Despite the difficulties posed by the direct impact of COVID-19 on the project process, KOICA officials unanimously expressed a sense of pride and satisfaction. This is because the project has brought tangible benefits to the people of Kyrgyzstan.

The processing time for services such as address changes, passport replacements, updates to the resident registration (family register), and driver's license and passport registration has been reduced by over 90%. Previously, all administrative services required an in-person visit to the relevant government office, and regardless of the task, it took at least an hour. To obtain additional documents, people had to visit other government offices and wait another hour, resulting in significant difficulties due to inefficient administrative procedures.

Some services that were available online were criticized for slow server response times, but this project has resolved those issues as well. By also providing server tuning, the processing time for electronic civil service applications has been reduced to one-tenth.

Another thing KOICA is looking forward to is the application portal for welfare and support programs, scheduled to launch this fall. This service will allow low-income families with minor children to easily apply online for monthly livelihood support, social allowances, and other benefits. Deputy Director Pyo said, "We expect that once this service is launched, a significant portion of the 'welfare blind spots' - where people cannot benefit from welfare programs due to difficulties in applying - will be eliminated."

The KOICA Kyrgyzstan Office is also actively providing follow-up support to ensure that practical assistance is delivered. The KOICA Office also produced promotional videos in the local language to help people who are either unaware that online services are available or find them difficult to use.

Officials at the KOICA Kyrgyzstan Office attributed the success of the project to "constant communication with the local community" and the long-standing support programs of the Korean government and KOICA, which they referred to as "sowing the seeds." Deputy Director Pyo said, "The positive evaluations from local stakeholders regarding KOICA's past projects greatly helped in carrying out this project," and added, "We will continue to actively manage projects for the joint prosperity of Korea and Kyrgyzstan."



• A training program inviting high-ranking Kyrgyzstan officials to showcase the excellence of Korea's e-government system

Integrated Rural Development Project in Kyrgyzstan

From education and livelihoods to self-governance : creating self-sufficient villages

In a rural village in southern Kyrgyzstan without a kindergarten, the sound of children's laughter can now be heard. This is because a multipurpose Women's Center jointly operated by the village women has opened. This place not only provides childcare services for the village children but also serves as a community center where women and residents can pursue self-development through leisure activities and economic opportunities. Vegetables grown in home gardens provide food for families, and surplus harvests are stored in warehouses before being sold at the market. The changes centered around the multipurpose Women's Center are noticeably transforming the lives of the village residents.

KOICA, in partnership with the international relief and development NGO Good Neighbors, is implementing the "Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP)," targeting 85,000 residents in 30 rural villages in the Osh and Batken regions of southern Kyrgyzstan. The core of the project is an "integrated approach" that transforms all aspects of residents' lives—including education, livelihoods, gender, and governance—rather than the typical infrastructure support or one-off training commonly provided in international development settings. For this project, a budget of over 10 billion won will be invested from 2021 to 2025, with cooperation from local residents, the government, international organizations, and local NGOs.



• Fruit farmer who increased productivity of apples through KOICA's agricultural technology training and the installation of smart irrigation facilities

From infrastructure to rights: an integrated strategy for transforming villages

The most notable aspect of this project is the connection between different sectors. This is based on the analysis that, in order to transform the entire village system beyond simply improving facilities or providing technical training, diverse elements such as women's rights, local infrastructure, technical education, and governance are to be interconnected. For example, if villagers are facing issues with drinking water, the project goes beyond simply installing water pipes—it also provides hygiene education and operates monitoring groups led by women leaders so that residents can manage the facilities themselves. Based on this approach, kitchen garden training was provided to enable the cultivation and sale of high-value vegetables in home gardens, and the system was designed to extend to joint storage and sales of the produce. Depending on the characteristics of each village, the types of crops grown, distribution channels, and infrastructure all differ. To this end, from the beginning of the project, surveys were conducted among residents, and expert consultations as well as one-on-one customized action plans were established.

In the 30 target villages, basic living infrastructure and agricultural and livestock storage and distribution facilities were established, while multipurpose Women's Centers were also created. The Women's Centers are used as kindergartens, income-generating spaces, and venues for community meetings. They serve as hubs for childcare, women's empowerment, and income generation. One village resident said, "At first, we needed a space for childcare, but now the women of the village are planning for their future at the center."

A differentiated approach was also taken in the area of income generation. KOICA organized about 1,200 farming households into crop-specific production groups and established separate storage and distribution facilities to enhance their sales competitiveness. In addition, a revolving microloan fund involving 3,790 households was operated to help farming families build a foundation for self-reliance.

A "governance experiment" led by residents and joined by the government

Another distinguishing feature of the project is its operational system based on resident participation and government cooperation. At the beginning of the project, KOICA organized village development committees in each village, enabling them to establish and implement their own development plans. The committees have become practical implementation bodies that lead the selection of village projects, maintenance, and the mobilization of external resources.

As a result, village residents have also become active participants in decision-making. So far, about 300 village leaders have completed training each year (with a total of 600 graduates), and 30 women farmer groups have been formed. They are leading joint income-generating activities and the operation of village meetings.

Cooperation with local governments was also achieved. KOICA invited 20 Kyrgyzstani government officials to Korea for training and practical field education, and jointly established a rural development coordination committee and implementation committee with the local Ministry of Agriculture to coordinate policy direction and implementation.



• the multipurpose Women's Center that empowers local women and provides childcare for their children



• Kyrgyzstani government officials who visited Korea to learn agricultural policy and practical know-how

One of the most significant achievements of the IRDP is the establishment of a "digital rural advisory platform." Noting the shortcomings of the existing village-level agricultural information delivery system, the project collaborated with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Agriculture and local IT companies to develop a rural advisory platform. Through this platform, farmers can now access customized information necessary for farming, such as climate data, agricultural technologies, and pest and disease forecasts. In the long term, the platform is designed to be expandable so that it can be applied to the agricultural administration of the Kyrgyzstan government.

Linking production, processing, distribution, and sales into a single flow

On the ground, various innovative elements and collaboration strategies also created synergy. A leading strategy is the establishment of "fruit clusters." The project areas have an environment suitable for growing apples, apricots, and cherries, but due to a lack of processing, storage, and distribution systems, the commercial value of the produce was low. KOICA developed a cluster strategy that links production, processing, distribution, and sales into a single flow.

Above all, agricultural technology training and the installation of smart irrigation systems were provided to farmers, while village-level cold storage and logistics facilities were also established. The Korea Rural Economic Institute also participated in the cluster strategy, providing economic analysis and policy advice. The focus was placed on designing a market foundation so that the local production-to-sales ecosystem can be sustained even after the project ends.

As a result of this project, the productivity of apples, raspberries, cherries, apricots, and potatoes increased by an average of 15.6%. A fruit cluster master plan was established with the local government, and capacity building for rural development policies was also carried out. By the end of the project, the goal is to reduce the poverty rate in underdeveloped areas of Kyrgyzstan by about 5% to 77.9%.

Meanwhile, two Aiyl Okmotus (rural municipalities)—Zhoosh and Chon-Alai—that participated in the IRDP were honored with first and third place, respectively, in the 2024 "Kyrgyzstan Best Aiyl Okmotu (AO)" contest. This contest is an annual event organized by the Kyrgyzstan government to select outstanding AOs nationwide, based on various criteria such as the level of autonomous village development and public administration capacity. Zhoosh ranked first by earning high marks among 235 AOs across the country, while Chon-Alai, located in one of the nation's isolated and underdeveloped regions, achieved the remarkable feat of placing third. The following are interview excerpts with the heads of Zhoosh and Chon-Alai.

Mini Interview 1

“Residents now feel confident they can transform their village themselves”



Baltybaev Aibek Zuduevich,
Head of Zhoosh Aiyl Okmotu

Q What do you think are the biggest changes in your Aiyl Okmotu (AO) and community through the IRDP, and the factors that made such changes possible?
After the IRDP, there have been many changes in our AO. The two villages that always struggled with water supply are now receiving a stable supply of drinking water after the project. With the establishment of a health clinic, residents are also able to access basic medical services. With the construction of a new dairy processing plant and the use of funds that enabled small-scale farmers to purchase more cattle, household incomes have increased significantly. I believe these changes were possible thanks to the residents who tried to make the village a better place to live and the leaders they elected from among themselves.

Q How do you think the experience you gained from participating in the IRDP can contribute to the future development of your AO and community?
Through the remarkable changes in our AO after the project, we have gained confidence that, with our efforts, we can transform our AO and villages into much better places. As residents began to enjoy in their village the things they could previously only experience in the city, they became more actively involved in village affairs and grew to love their village even more. I believe this is one of the greatest achievements for our AO in this project.

Q In particular, how do you think women’s lives have changed through the multipurpose Women’s Center and basic infrastructure projects in the village, and what impact do you believe these changes have had on individuals and the community?
With the establishment of the multipurpose Women’s Center, gatherings among village women have become more frequent, and there has been a noticeable increase in cooperation among them. Additionally, some students are now studying English or Russian through the after-school programs at the multipurpose Women’s Center, and some women are contributing to their household income by participating in agricultural training. This is leading to increased income for both the AO and the village.

Q Your AO was awarded first place overall in the 2024 Best Aiyl Okmotu in Kyrgyzstan contest. What do you think is the reason your AO received this honor?
The “Best Aiyl Okmotu in Kyrgyzstan” contest has been held annually since 2013 to encourage excellent local governments. The award criteria include various aspects such as the provision of basic services, the participation of residents in decision-making, and attracting external investments. I believe the main reasons our AO was able to win first place overall were the united efforts of the village leaders and the AO government, as well as proactive investments aimed at creating a better living environment and promoting long-term development. I also believe that KOICA and Good Neighbors played a significant role by supporting the resolution of water supply issues and the construction of the health clinic.

Q If you have any words you’d like to share with KOICA and Good Neighbors, who have supported rural development in your AO and worked as partners, please let us know.
I sincerely thank them for their wholehearted support for our AO. I hope to continue working together on various projects in the future.



• Residents of Zhoosh Aiyl Okmotu, Kyrgyzstan, working together burying water pipes

Mini Interview 2

“Women are no longer leaving their villages to make money”



Kulov Anarbek Abdyramanovich,
Head of Chon-Alai Aiyl Okmotu

Q What do you think are the biggest changes in your Aiyl Okmotu (AO) and community through the IRDP, and the factors that made such changes possible?
Chon-Alai had been a rather barren AO, and until the IRDP, the quality of life for its residents was not high. However, through this project, a kindergarten was built, raising the educational level of the children, and in one village, a 5-kilometer-long irrigation canal was constructed, which improved agricultural efficiency. In addition, the chronic drinking water problem was resolved, and electric poles were installed throughout the villages, making the electricity supply much more stable. At the center of these changes were the leaders of each village. The villagers identified outstanding leaders, and the elected leaders devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the betterment of the village.

Q How do you think the experience you gained from participating in the IRDP can contribute to the future development of your AO and community?
Seed potatoes are the main crop in Chon-Alai. Through this project, a cooperative was formed, providing a foundation for the seed potato business to further develop. In fact, through the cooperative, farmers in our AO have exchanged knowledge with early potato-growing cooperatives from other regions and expanded the market for seed potatoes. I believe that, with the continued development of the seed potato business, the lives of the residents will become even more prosperous in the future.

Q In particular, how do you think women’s lives have changed through the multipurpose Women’s Center and basic infrastructure projects in the village, and what impact do you believe these changes have had on individuals and the community?
It is no exaggeration to say that women are the central figures of the Village Development Committees and the multipurpose Women’s Center, which play a very important role in the IRDP. In fact, 80% of the Village Development Committee members are women. In the past, women in this region had to leave for the city to find employment or receive an education, but now they can receive training and work at the multipurpose Women’s Center, so they no longer have to leave the village. For example, women who received training through the Kitchen Garden Group established by this project are now cultivating organic vegetables in greenhouses, contributing to both their households and the village.

Q Your AO ranked third place overall in the 2024 Best Aiyl Okmotu in Kyrgyzstan contest. What do you think is the reason your AO received this honor?
The award evaluation criteria includes investment level, quality of education, environmental improvement, and infrastructure development, and without the support of KOICA and Good Neighbors, it would probably have been impossible to win the award. This is because KOICA and Good Neighbors provided significant support for major changes in the village, such as improving water and electricity supply, constructing a kindergarten and a multipurpose Women’s Center, and building seed potato storage facilities.

Q If you have any words you’d like to share with KOICA and Good Neighbors, who have supported rural development in your AO and worked as partners, please let us know.
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to KOICA and Good Neighbors. I was especially touched by their unwavering support and their commitment to building a great future for our village. K



• Women studying together at the multipurpose Women’s Center in Chon-Alai, Kyrgyzstan



• Teachers who have completed the training program designed to enhance Uzbek youth's awareness of climate change adaptation

GGGI Green Rehabilitation Investment Project for Karakalpakstan Republic to Address Impact of the Aral Sea Crisis

Why the 'private investment promotion' support project in Uzbekistan is highly regarded

The term "climate catastrophe" is now being used as the climate crisis grows increasingly severe, and Central Asia is one of the regions directly affected by this crisis. The biggest issue is "water." The Aral Sea, once the world's fourth-largest lake, had more than 90% of its area turn into desert by the early 2000s, leaving Central Asia with a severe water shortage. As the Aral Sea dried up, most of the landlocked countries of Central Asia relied on river water flowing down from the mountains to meet their daily and industrial water needs.

Uzbekistan is the country most severely affected by water scarcity. As the flow of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, which are Uzbekistan's largest and main sources of water, decreased by up to 20%, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev delivered an emergency address announcing the introduction of a water resource management system and financial measures to support affected farmers to resolve the water crisis caused by the decreased river flow. For Uzbekistan, where crop exports are the main source of national income, the sharp decline in water resources threatens the very foundation of the economy. Due to water shortages, there has also been a population outflow. Since 2015, many Uzbek farmers living near the Aral Sea have migrated to Kazakhstan. Uzbekistan is experiencing conflicts with neighboring upstream countries, which are located at the sources of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, Central Asia's main water resources, over issues such as dam construction.



• Uzbekistani farmers are receiving training in drip irrigation, a method that delivers water drop by drop directly to the roots of plants to reduce water waste.

Strengthen climate response business capabilities and secure seed funding of 1.4 trillion won

Korea is one of the countries most actively involved in addressing these issues in Uzbekistan. According to the Korean government's 2023 announcement, Korea became the third-largest provider of bilateral aid among major donor countries, following Japan and France. This is also related to cultural, economic, and historical ties. Korea is the fifth-largest trading partner for Uzbekistan, following China, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey, and various Korean companies, such as those in the automotive and textile industries, have entered the Uzbek market. Moreover, the presence of a Koryoin community of about 170,000 and the popularity of K-culture content have also boosted local goodwill toward Korea.

The field that KOICA is most actively supporting is the 'climate crisis.' The leading project is the "Green Rehabilitation Investment Project (GRIP) for Community-Led Eco-Friendly Reconstruction in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan in Response to the Aral Sea Crisis," which has been carried out from 2021 to this year with a budget of about 8 billion won. This is the first international organization cooperation project carried out by KOICA in Uzbekistan in partnership with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), the first international organization established under Korea's leadership. Through this project, KOICA supported the four Aral Sea-adjacent regions of Kegeyli, Bozatov, Chimbay, and Karaozak in Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic in western Uzbekistan, by establishing climate-smart agriculture policies, developing climate resilience capacities for smallholder farmers, developing climate-adaptive agricultural business models, and improving financial access for local businesses and farmers to enhance climate resilience. These regions were resort areas and prosperous fishing villages until the 1950s, but due to rapid climate change and a sharp decrease in water, residents lost their livelihoods and either left or suffered from poverty. "These regions frequently experience disasters caused by the climate crisis," a KOICA official said. "Our goal was to build community resilience to disasters and create cultural, social, and economic sustainability in the region."

In particular, to improve financial access



• Uzbek women with disabilities participating in GGGI's microgreens management training

for local businesses and farmers to enhance climate resilience, GGGI successfully facilitated the issuance of approximately 784 billion won in Sustainability Bonds (bonds whose proceeds are used exclusively for projects that create environmental or social value) by Sanoat Qurilish Bank (SQB), a commercial bank in Uzbekistan, and about 620 billion won in Green Bonds (bonds used to finance climate change mitigation, adaptation, and eco-friendly projects) by Agrobank. This achievement is regarded as a meaningful outcome, as it demonstrated that a traditional ODA project is able to attract large-scale private investment.

"This project will be a great source of hope in addressing climate change issues," said Utkir Jumanmov, Secretary General of the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change of Uzbekistan, in praise of the project. He added, "It is a remarkable achievement that a donor government and an international organization have created greater synergy by cooperating with local commercial banks."

Support for "eco-friendly and climate-adaptive businesses" for local residents

KOICA will continue to support climate crisis response projects in Uzbekistan. Starting next year, it will launch the tentatively titled "Enhancing Uzbekistan's Paris Agreement Implementation and Supporting for Cooperative Action with the Republic of Korea under Article 6" (hereinafter referred to as "Enhancing Uzbekistan's Paris Agreement Implementation and Cooperative Action with the Republic of Korea). In addition, the "Capacity Building for Forest and Urban Greening based on Smart Technology in Tashkent" project (hereinafter referred to as the "Capacity Building for Forest and Urban Greening in Tashkent" project), which began in 2023, is also well underway.

"Enhancing Uzbekistan's Paris Agreement Implementation and Cooperative Action with the Republic of Korea" project is based on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which states that the international community will voluntarily cooperate through intergovernmental agreements and use market-based approaches to reduce mitigation costs in order to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This project, with a budget of 10 billion won, is being carried out in cooperation with GGGI to support Uzbekistan's implementation of the Paris Agreement, foster experts in greenhouse gas reduction projects, and assist in identifying related projects.

"Capacity Building for Forest and Urban Greening in Tashkent" project aims to establish sustainable forest and urban greening business models using ICT-based smart tree production technology, and ultimately to strengthen Uzbekistan's long-term capacity to respond to climate change. Training in green agriculture is also being provided to farmers, and plans are in place to foster sustainable agricultural businesses in response to the climate crisis in cooperation with national institutions, such as the Uzbekistan Forestry Agency and state-owned nurseries.

KOICA said, "This project supports the reforestation of Uzbekistan's forests devastated by the climate crisis, while also fostering the growth of local, self-sustaining green businesses." In particular, a key feature of the project is the transfer of advanced forest greening technologies to local residents, with a strong emphasis on encouraging the participation of local women, who have been marginalized until now. The project directly contributes to addressing forest degradation, while also laying the foundation for the growth of self-sustaining green businesses in the region and helping marginalized local communities achieve self-reliance.

"Uzbekistan has great growth potential and is friendly toward Korea," a KOICA official said. "By proactively responding to the climate crisis, solving local issues, and creating environmentally and economically sustainable industrial structures, we can pursue long-term mutual prosperity with Korea."



• KOICA's Aral Sea GRIP project site







• (From left) Abdiyeva Iroda, head of the Department of Korean Language at Uzbekistan State World Languages University; Mubina Abdurahimova, student at SCHOOL №283; Kim Ha-young, KOICA project volunteer

Project Volunteer to Raise Awareness of Korean Culture in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

30 years of volunteer dispatch to Uzbekistan State World Languages University: a bridge of trust built through language

The relationship between KOICA and Uzbekistan State World Languages University (hereinafter UzSWLU) dates back 30 years. KOICA began dispatching volunteers to UzSWLU for Korean language education in 1996. Uzbekistani students were able to improve their language skills by naturally communicating with Korean volunteers each year. In addition, KOICA is expanding opportunities for academic exchange by supporting Korean language education facilities and the research activities of professors. Abdiyeva Iroda, head of the Department of Korean Language at UzSWLU, says, "The dispatch of KOICA volunteers has provided educational support and has also served as an opportunity to elevate the level of the university and the department."

In what ways have KOICA volunteers specifically changed Korean language education sites? And how have the students' futures changed? KOICA met Abdiyeva Iroda, head of the Department of Korean Language at UzSWLU, Kim Ha-young, KOICA project volunteer, and Mubina Abdurahimova, a student at SCHOOL №283.

"Nurturing local korean experts"

Q Please introduce yourself to our readers.

Abdiyeva Iroda While teaching Korean at UzSWLU, I have worked to promote cultural exchange between Korea and Uzbekistan. Having seen how much our university and department have grown through their cooperation with KOICA, I feel a great sense of pride.

Mubina Abdurahimova I am an 8th-grade student at School No. 283. I am very interested in Korean culture, language, and the education system. To learn more through exchanges with volunteers from Korea, I decided to participate in the KOICA class offered at my school this year.

Kim Ha-young I majored in piano in Korea. While volunteering to give lessons at an alternative school for North Korean defectors, I found volunteering to be very rewarding. This experience sparked my interest in overseas volunteer work, so I

applied to be a KOICA project volunteer. Thanks to my experience working on the communications team during my KOICA Young Professional internship, I became confident that I could contribute to this kind of work, which led me to apply for the digital media field.

Q Can you tell us more about the Department of Korean Language at UzSWLU?

Abdiyeva Iroda It provides a broad education not only in linguistic knowledge such as Korean grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, but also in the cultural background of Korea, including its history, society, literature, and arts. Many graduates from our department have found employment at Korean companies and are active in fields such as interpretation and translation, media, and tourism. Some students go on to study at universities in Korea or work as Korean language teachers at educational institutions both at home and abroad. Interacting with KOICA volunteers has a significant impact on students' career planning.

Q What programs do KOICA volunteers run?

Abdiyeva Iroda They give lectures on Korean conversation, pronunciation correction, and Korean literature, and also conduct cultural classes such as K-POP dance, fan dance, samulnori, and taekwondo. Students always respond enthusiastically to all programs because they can experience authentic Korean culture and language firsthand.

Kim Ha-young While participating as a teaching assistant, I demonstrated gonggi, a traditional Korean game. I was impressed by how the children cheered, clapped, and were amazed each time I succeeded at a new level of skill with the gonggi marbles. I never expected to feel such a sense of fulfillment while playing gonggi (laughs).

Q From an educational standpoint, what stood out for you?

Mubina Abdurahimova Spending time with the Korean language teachers made me feel as if I had entered a completely different world. It definitely helped me understand Korea and its people better. Now that I can understand simple sentences, I enjoy Korean videos and websites much more.

Abdiyeva Iroda It's a good example that fits the purpose of the KOICA program (laughs). The goal of our department is to 'train field-oriented global Korean language specialists'. KOICA volunteers play a significant role in achieving this goal. They provide students with practical and authentic Korean language experiences, and create decisive opportunities for them to develop cultural confidence and a global outlook.



• Uzbek female students participating in the Korean Language Festival, an event that promotes Korean language and culture



• Uzbek students demonstrating taekwondo, which they learned from Korean volunteers

"My dream is to make the Korean language more widely known in Uzbekistan."

Q This year marks the 30th anniversary of our exchange program. How has it changed over the years?

Abdiyeva Iroda The partnership with KOICA has been an integral part of the growth of our university and department. With support from KOICA, the "Korea Corner" was established within the university in 2007. In 2012, a Korean language research lab was established, and the following year, we co-authored and published the "Oson Korean" textbook. We also published a translated collection of Uzbek folk tales. KOICA has also consistently supported facilities and equipment. Thanks to KOICA's support, a Korean language classroom, a computer lab, and a simultaneous interpretation room for journalism students were established. Above all, the greatest significance has come from the encounters between people.

Q Could you explain in more detail?

Abdiyeva Iroda Until seven years ago, we had only welcomed volunteer members from Korea, but since then, a student exchange program has been launched, allowing Uzbek students to attend classes at universities in Korea. There is also an active faculty exchange program. Every year, professors from our department go to Korea for training. In 2018, journalism faculty members visited Korea with support from KOICA.

Kim Ha-young As a volunteer, I also learned a lot through this visit. I truly realized that volunteering is ultimately a process in which sincerity is conveyed between people. Although it was a short period of time, it was also a time I lived more intensely than ever before. At first, I felt both excitement and anxiety, but as I interacted with various people and learned together, I found myself gradually growing at my own pace. I was also able to envision my future career path more clearly.

Q Is there any additional support you would like to see for local youth?

Kim Ha-young Many young people feel a vague sense of anxiety about their future, but often lack information about what preparations they should make and what options are available to them. It would be great if future projects could include programs that provide practical support for career planning, such as career education, communication training, and mentoring.

Q What direction do you hope future exchanges will take?

Mubina Abdurahimova Once I become more proficient in Korean, I would like to teach the language and culture to children. My dream is to spread the Korean language widely among the people of Uzbekistan. I hope there will be more opportunities that help me achieve these goals.

Kim Ha-young In the past, I thought international development was too difficult and somewhat distant from me. However, through this experience, I realized that even small, everyday actions can be part of international development. I learned that approaching international development "as much as I can, in the way I can" is the true starting point. I hope that, through more active exchanges, young people in Korea will be able to have meaningful experiences like mine.

Abdiyeva Iroda Language and culture are the bridges that cross borders. KOICA is the organization that has done the best job of building such bridges. I hope that future cooperation with KOICA will develop in a sustainable and professional direction, including joint textbook development, the production of digital content, and exchange programs for professors and students. In particular, I expect that large-scale projects such as the construction of a Korean Cultural Center will greatly enhance the status of our university and department. I hope that exchanges in Korean language education will lead to cooperation in various fields such as culture and industry. K



• A KOICA volunteer is teaching Korean to Uzbek students.



• Firdavsi Farrukhzod (L) and Masrur Barotov of Tajikistan, who took part in KOICA's Global Training Program 'CIAT.' After completing their training, they returned home and contribute to the development of their native country, serving as a bridge between Tajikistan and Korea.

Meeting with trainees of the global training program

I will become the 'seed' that leads the future of Tajikistan

KOICA actively takes part in planting "seeds" for sustainable development in developing countries. KOICA's Global Training Program CIAT (Capacity Improvement & Advancement for Tomorrow) is KOICA's flagship development cooperation project, having provided training programs since 1991. "CIAT" is pronounced the same as the Korean word for "seed", a linguistic coincidence that reinforces the program's spirit and symbolism already embedded throughout its mission. It targets officials, technical personnel, researchers, and other talents from developing countries who will contribute to the growth of their respective countries. This program, which had produced a cumulative total of over 90,000 trainees as of last year, offers a wide range of training—from short-term courses lasting two to three weeks to degree programs supporting master's and doctoral studies. Most trainees return to their home countries after completing the program, actively contributing to their nations' development and serving as vital bridges connecting Korea and their own countries.

Outstanding talents from Tajikistan, which has a deep cooperative relationship with Korea, participate in this program every year. Let's meet two such graduates who earned their degrees with excellent academic performance and are working hard to promote Tajikistan's development by benchmarking Korea's experiences.

Interview 1



Firdavsi Farrukhzod

- Currently Senior Specialist, Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan
- Master's Degree: KAIST MBA in Social Entrepreneurship

Q Please introduce yourself.

My name is Firdavsi Farrukhzod. I am 33 years old and currently reside in Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan. I am working as a chief specialist of the Department of Trade Policy and Services of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan.

Q Where did you study in Korea?

I obtained my MBA in Social Entrepreneurship from KAIST. I chose this field because it was closely related to my work responsibilities at the time and matched well with my academic background. During my studies, I gained a variety of knowledge that I could immediately apply to my job.

Q What kind of work did you do before coming to Korea?

I was in charge of inclusive and sustainable economic development work in the Department of Trade Policy and Services. My main tasks involved creating responsible business models that incorporate social value into economic policies and ensuring that the United Nations' SDG initiatives were reflected in Tajikistan's trade policies.

Q Why did you decide to study in Korea?

I decided to study in Korea because of its outstanding reputation in social innovation, economic development, and high-quality education. Korea's rapid transformation into a leading advanced economy has been a great source of inspiration for me, especially in areas such as entrepreneurship, technology, and social development. I was particularly impressed by Korea's development model that harmoniously blends tradition and modernity, which made me believe that studying in Korea would allow me to learn practical skills that I could apply back in my own country after returning.

Q What is the biggest change you experienced after studying in Korea?

My perspective on the world has significantly changed. Through my studies in Korea, I realized that achieving national goals requires not just hard work but also cooperation and harmony across various economic sectors such as technology, science, industry, agriculture, and public services. I also learned how the coexistence of principles and innovation drives rapid and sustainable development.

I also learned a lot about work attitude. Korean people place great importance on principles and are very strict about time management. My experience studying in Korea helped me develop the same attitude. I resolved to live as productively as possible, and above all, I became truly committed to managing my time well.

Q Among those you met in Korea, who left a lasting impression on you?

I remember working with Professor Paik Yongwook, who is very passionate about social entrepreneurship. Professor Paik is highly dedicated to his research and values practicality, and I learned a lot from these qualities.

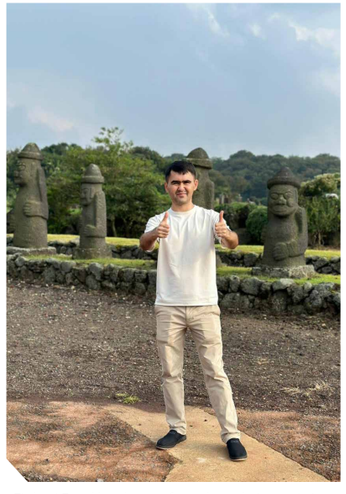
Interacting with international students from many different countries was also very helpful. Through these exchanges, I was able to develop a broader, more global perspective beyond just Tajikistan and Korea. The connections I made with fellow students have formed a valuable network, and many of us still keep in touch to this day.

Q What is your most memorable experience during your stay in Korea?

Completing the final research presentation before the professors was my most memorable moment. It was meaningful because I could demonstrate the time and effort I had devoted while studying in Korea, as well as the growth I had achieved as a result. That moment allowed me to realize that my time in Korea wasn't just for academic growth, but also for significant personal and professional development. I felt that I had grown substantially both as an expert in my field and as an individual.

Q What are your future goals?

My goal is to contribute to the creation of inclusive and innovative trade policies



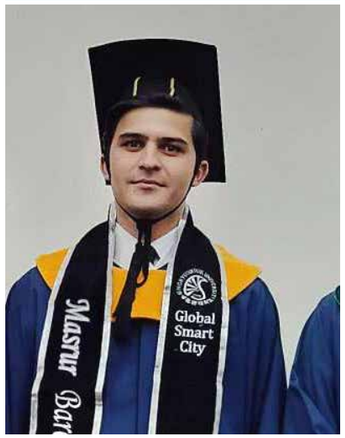
• Firdavsi Farrukhzod poses for a photo during a trip in Korea.

that foster both the spread of social values and economic growth in Tajikistan. I learned how strategic planning and management, technology, and strong institutions drive economic innovation while studying in Korea. I intend to apply this experience to Tajikistan's trade policy to contribute to the sustainable development of my country.

Q Do you think KOICA's Global Training Program contributes to the development of Tajikistan and other countries that send students to Korea?
Certainly. This program cultivates experts by deepening their knowledge and practical skills while maintaining a global perspective. Naturally, it greatly contributes to the growth of each participating country. Beyond academic exchanges, it helps create meaningful networks in the field of international cooperation and promotes mutual cultural understanding. I believe that students who have gained these experiences and support will develop effective and sustainable policies in their home countries.

Q Do you have any messages you would like to share with KOICA or the Korean government?
I sincerely thank KOICA and the Korean government for providing such a valuable opportunity. I hope that KOICA will further expand this kind of support and maintain continuous communication with scholarship students like myself to maximize the long-term impact of the program.

Interview 2



Masrur Barotov

- Currently Head of the International Cooperation Team, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan
- Master's Degree: Sungkyunkwan University, Master's Degree Program in Smart City

Q Please introduce yourself.
My name is Masrur Barotov, and I am currently serving as the head of the International Cooperation Team at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan. My main areas of focus are international development, economic cooperation, and digital transformation. I have two master's degrees: one in Diplomacy and Policy Studies from the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Tajikistan, and another in Smart City from Sungkyunkwan University in Korea.

Q We understand that you earned one of your master's degrees in Korea with the support of KOICA.
Thanks to KOICA's support, I was able to study at Sungkyunkwan University from 2022 to 2024 and obtain a master's degree in the field of Smart City. At that time, Tajikistan was at a new turning point in urban innovation and digital transformation, which is why I chose this major. The reason I chose this path is that the Smart City program at Sungkyunkwan University is internationally recognized, and Korea's experience in urban development is especially meaningful for achieving Tajikistan's goals. During my master's program, I served as the class representative. Through discussions with students from different countries and by taking on a wide range of responsibilities both within and outside the department, I was also able to develop my leadership skills.

Q What kind of work did you do before coming to Korea?
I worked as a Leading Specialist at the Department of External Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan. My responsibilities included handling international trade affairs and managing intergovernmental discussions as well as multilateral cooperation initiatives. These tasks closely aligned with my academic interests, particularly in infrastructure development and the digital economy.

Q Why did you decide to study in Korea?
I chose Korea because it is leading global trends in innovative fields such as the digital economy and information communication technology. In particular, I wanted to learn the secrets behind Korea's rapid economic and technological development. Korea is the country that transitioned from a developing nation to a developed one the fastest. The Korean development model provides great inspiration for Tajikistan's economic development and is also a practical model that can be effectively benchmarked.
I had also heard about KOICA's outstanding achievements and strong reputation for expertise in the field of development cooperation, so I was very eager to learn how KOICA staff work.

Q What are some of the most important lessons in Korea?
Through studying in Korea, I was able to establish my values regarding public service. I also learned how to integrate technology and policy to foster inclusive growth. The greatest change has been my ability to take a holistic and digital-centered approach to governance in the economic sector. During my time as the class representative, I often had to lead and persuade students from different cultural backgrounds to reach different types of decisions. These experiences were invaluable in helping me develop my communication and leadership skills, as I learned how to foster consensus and harmony among diverse group members.



• Masrur Barotov (4th from R, front row) poses for a group photo during the World Smart City Expo.

Q Did KOICA provide enough support throughout the process?
KOICA staff were always kind to me and ready to help with anything I needed. They also organized numerous events that allowed me to build friendships with participants from other countries in the program. The networks I formed through these experiences have been invaluable, greatly contributing not only to my personal growth but also to enhancing my work performance.

Q What was the most challenging aspect of staying in Korea?
At first, the language barrier and adapting to the very fast-paced Korean academic environment were challenging. However, the university provided support to help me adjust well, and thanks to the kind and welcoming atmosphere of Korean society, I was able to quickly overcome these obstacles and achieve success both in my relationships and my studies.

Q What was your most memorable experience?
I worked on a team research project with Korean students and several international students, focusing on methods for economic development centered around smart cities. Through building teamwork, we overcame the challenges of the research, and in the process, we naturally engaged in cultural exchange as well. I also realized once again how important it is to share perspectives and experiences from diverse cultures and to approach solutions in a way that embraces them when addressing social issues.

Q As it relates to your major, which particular experience has stayed with you the longest?
I participated in the World Smart City Expo and engaged with experts from around the world in digital urban infrastructure and city planning. This experience allowed me to deepen my learning by connecting what I studied in class with real-world experiences from different countries, and it greatly influenced the setting of my professional goals.

Q What are your professional goals?
Building on my experience in Korea, I want to lead Tajikistan's smart governance, sustainable infrastructure development, and digital transformation projects that connect various regions. Through the use of technology and data, I aim to modernize Tajikistan and advance its economy and urban infrastructure.

Q What do you think about KOICA's Global Training Program?
I think it is an excellent program. This initiative provides scholarship students with opportunities to learn about the cultures of many different countries through education, networking, and diverse experiences. After returning home, scholarship recipients apply the knowledge and experiences gained in Korea to contribute to the development of their own countries. For example, the professional networks I have built by participating in this program will become valuable assets for the development of Tajikistan. The collective efforts of scholarship recipients ultimately contribute to the sustainable development of the international community.

Q What message would you like to convey to the Korean government?
I would like to express my deepest gratitude to KOICA for implementing the Global Training Program to contribute to development worldwide, and to the Korean government for its full support of this initiative. Furthermore, I hope KOICA will continue to play a greater role in digital cooperation and in nurturing young leaders. KOICA has provided us with much more than just an educational opportunity. It is an outstanding program, and I plan to use what I have learned in Korea to bring about comprehensive innovation in Tajikistan's administration and international cooperation sectors.



• Nazgul Sharipova, Manager of KazAID, visited KOICA last April to learn about Korea's ODA projects.

Interview with Nazgul Sharipova, manager of KazAID

"I'll learn KOICA's ODA know-how and accelerate KazAID's development"

"From a recipient country to a donor country." This is the first miracle achieved worldwide by Korea in the global Official Development Assistance (ODA) field. As emerging donor countries continue to appear one after another, the number of countries seeking to learn from Korea's experience is increasing. Kazakhstan is one of the most prominent emerging donors. We met Nazgul Sharipova, Manager of the Kazakhstan Agency for International Development (KazAID), who visited Korea from April 13 to 22 to learn about Korea's ODA. Let's hear her story and aspiration to "recreate Korea's miracle in Kazakhstan."

Q Could you please introduce yourself?

My name is Nazgul Sharipova, and I serve as the Manager of the Partnerships and Regional Projects Department at KazAID. I am responsible for cooperation in Europe and the Americas, as well as in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, which are key partner countries for Kazakhstan. One of the flagship projects is the annual program called "Dostyk: Digital Transformation," carried out in collaboration with the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP), Nazarbayev University, and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. "Dostyk" means "friendship" in Kazakh, and this program invites government officials and public sector experts from all five Central Asian countries to share in Kazakhstan's and Singapore's experiences with digital transformation in the field of public administration.

Starting this year, I am in charge of the "Avicenna: Healthcare" program. This program is conducted in partnership with the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) and the National Astana Medical University of Kazakhstan to support medical students in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The program was named after "Avicenna," a renowned medieval Persian physician who made major contributions to medicine, philosophy and science.

Q Is this your first time visiting Korea? How did you feel when you learned about your assignment to Korea?

This is actually my second time visiting Korea. My first visit was in December 2023, as part of the Busan Global Partnership Forum in Seoul. The event facilitated important discussions on sustainable development and partnerships in this field, while also bringing together stakeholders in the area of international development. This time, I am visiting Korea for my secondment at KOICA. The first thought that crossed my mind was that I was excited to learn about Korea's and KOICA's experience in ODA and implementing ODA projects. Despite having been a partner country in the past, Korea is now implementing various projects in its priority countries.

Q What are your thoughts on being the first KazAID staff member assigned to KOICA?

I was truly delighted when I heard about my first assignment to KOICA in Korea. It provides a valuable opportunity to learn about KOICA, and I will also be able to apply the insights I have gained while working at KazAID. I think this experience is a great opportunity to extend the partnership between our organizations and exchange knowledge and expertise. This is especially true considering KOICA's rich background and history in the field of ODA.

Q What comes to mind when you think of "KOICA"?

What comes to mind first is taking a photo with my colleagues at the KOICA headquarters during my first visit to Korea in 2023. Next is PeKO, the symbol of KOICA. I only recently learned about PeKO, but it gives a very welcoming and friendly impression.

Q As an ODA expert from Kazakhstan, an emerging donor country, how do you view Korea's experience in development cooperation?development cooperation?

Korea, like Kazakhstan, was once a recipient of aid and is now a donor country. This makes it incredibly valuable for us to learn from Korea's experience in the field of ODA, especially as part of South-South cooperation*.

KazAID is a young organization, established in 2020. Each year, we grow and continue to expand the number of projects. This is why it is essential for us to gain more knowledge in project management processes in order to achieve better results and contribute to sustainable development more effectively.

KOICA's experience is unique for us, as it not only engages partner countries but also involves Korean civil society and businesses in its projects. This approach not only fosters public-private partnership within Korea but also facilitates the sharing of Korean private sector technologies and expertise with other countries.

Q What areas of KOICA expertise or which KOICA systems can most significantly contribute to KazAID's development?

I would appreciate if it KOICA could share know-how and systems related to the project planning processes — particularly how responsibilities are distributed among team members, how to assess potential risks that may arise before, during, and after project implementation, as well as what aspects are considered to carry out evaluation and monitoring.



• Nazgul Sharipova, the manager of KazAID, is posing in front of the KOICA headquarters building in Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do.

*South-South cooperation: A concept different from the one involving the advanced countries of the Global North, referring to economic, technological, and political mutual cooperation among developing countries in the Global South.

Q What would you most like to learn during your time in Korea?

I would like to learn more about the preparation steps of projects, as I find it extremely important to understand what elements you consider and how the processes work. If a project considers the needs of the partner country and is thoroughly planned, it already instills confidence in its effectiveness.

Another aspect I am interested in is how KOICA ensures the effectiveness of the project results, as over time it can become challenging to maintain the original goals of the project.

And finally, as a project manager at KazAID, I am highly enthusiastic about learning more about KOICA's activities and priorities in Central Asia, as this region is the main focus for our Agency.

Q What cooperations have KazAID and KOICA worked on together? Also, what are the plans for the future?

Since the establishment of our Agency, KazAID and KOICA have a consistent partnership. To lay the foundation for our collaboration, KazAID and KOICA signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of ODA in 2021. In September 2024, we renewed the MoU to reaffirm our commitments.

We have previously implemented joint activities under the 1st Action Plan, held meetings to explore partnership opportunities, as well as to share experiences in the field of ODA. Last year, we had a visit of the KOICA representatives in KazAID office.

In 2025, within the framework of the MoU, KazAID and KOICA signed the 2nd Action Plan to define joint priorities for 2025-2027. Our organization continue to cooperate in context of this document, with this secondment opportunity being one of the examples.

For the past couple of years, we have been actively working on developing our Joint Fellowship Training "Capacity Building on Digital Transformation and Cooperation for Central Asian countries



• Nazgul Sharipova, KazAID manager (third from the right), and KOICA staffs are chatting together during a break.

(2025-2027)" in the field of digitalization in public administration. The first component of the multiyear training will launch in August this year in Astana, Kazakhstan under KazAID's "Dostyk: Digitalization" programme. In 2026 and 2027, the participants will have a chance to continue their professional development in Korea. Our agencies invite government officials from Central Asia in the field of digitalization to share the experiences of Kazakhstan and Korea in this area. This multilateral programme is intended for the participants from all five Central Asian countries, namely: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

Q Let me ask a lighter question. Is Korea well known in Kazakhstan?

Of course. K-pop and K-dramas are very popular, and Korean food is especially well-loved. We have a lot of Korean food places in Kazakhstan, and I would say that we have ramyeon in almost every store. I personally love tteokbokki. Lately, I also see that Korean films are catching the interest of people not only in Kazakhstan but also in other countries. I think that the movies are very creative and interesting.

Q What was the most impressive place or food you experienced during your visit in Korea?

I visited N Seoul Tower, Dongdaemun Design Plaza, and Seoul Forest. At N Seoul Tower, I enjoyed the beautiful night view of Seoul, and I also found the futuristic architectural style of Dongdaemun Design Plaza fascinating, especially since it was designed by my favorite architect, Zaha Hadid. Seoul Forest was impressive as a space full of people enjoying their time playing games or chatting amid nature. I really wanted to try bungeoppang when I came to Korea, but unfortunately, I couldn't. If I have the chance next time, I definitely want to try it.

Q What do you think you'll miss the most about Korea when you return to your country?

I can definitely say that the people and the hospitality at KOICA are the things I will miss and think about the most. I am very grateful for the warm welcome I received during my stay and how everyone made an effort to make me feel involved. There were new people having lunch with me every day, which allowed me to get to know more people. I even got a chance to speak in Kazakh and Russian and eat kurt, which is traditional Kazakh dried fermented milk product with a salty taste, something I absolutely did not expect and deeply appreciated.

Q What do you expect from the future relationship between Korea and Central Asia, including Kazakhstan?

Korea is Kazakhstan's largest investment and trade partner. Additionally, many descendants of Koreans live in Kazakhstan. The fact that the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum has been held annually clearly demonstrates that Kazakhstan and Korea regard each other as important cooperation partners. I also hope that Korea will continue to gradually develop various avenues for mutual collaboration with Kazakhstan and the other four Central Asian countries in the future. I believe that, considering the global achievements of Korean companies, collaboration between Korea and Central Asian countries through public-private partnerships will generate unprecedented synergy beyond anyone's expectations. K



• Viktor Moon, a Koryoin master painter, settled in Gwangju, Jeollanam-do

Interview with Viktor Moon, a Koryoin master painter

"I want to create works conveying the history of the Koryoin's forced relocation

Viktor Moon, a painter who has explored the history of ethnic Koreans (Koryoin) from the former Soviet Union who were forcibly relocated in Russia or Central Asia and sought his own roots, has settled in Gwangju Koryoin Village, Jeollanam-do. Born in 1951, he returned to his ancestral land with a collection of paintings he had created in his native Kazakhstan. His official settlement date was March 1, 2024. Now, he wants to spend the rest of his life in the city of Gwangju, devoting himself to art and leaving an artistic legacy for future generations.

He is a third-generation Koryoin from Ushtobe, Kazakhstan. Born in the first Koryoin settlement, he graduated from Almaty Art College in 1975 and began his artistic career in St. Petersburg, Russia. He later worked as the chief artist of the National State Koryo Theater of Kazakhstan (hereinafter referred to as the 'Koryo Theater') and for a satirical magazine. He is an internationally recognized painter whose works are housed in the Presidential Palace and the National Museum of Art in Kazakhstan, and also in art museums across the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Egypt, Japan, and Russia. However, the true significance of his paintings became apparent only after his "return" to this land.

Now, "Our History"

He first visited Gwangju in 1994 for an exhibition. In 2014, while staying in Gwangju and working on his paintings, he learned with the help of an acquaintance that his family name belonged to the Nampyeong Moon clan. He even visited "Moon Rock," a site tied to the origin

legend of the Nampyeong Moon lineage. "It was only then that I truly found my roots," he recalls.

His family history is filled with epic stories of migration, exile, survival, and return. His grandfather was relocated to the Maritime Province in Russia, and later to Kazakhstan. He has retraced that journey in reverse, returning to the Korean Peninsula. This is why his statement, "Returning to the Korean Peninsula feels like destiny," doesn't just come across as sentimental, and why it resonates so deeply.



• Artist Viktor Moon is currently working on an illustrated book based on traditional Korean folktales. His goal is to help Koryoin children living in Central Asia connect with their roots through these stories.

The Heart of Koryoin, Koryo Theater

His artistic journey began with a scene from his childhood. "I was born and raised in Leninkits, a remote rural village in Ushtobe, Kazakhstan. There weren't even proper houses around us. I lived in a mud house, and when I was 10, I once carved the face of a commander from a postcard into a brick using a kitchen knife," he said. "One day" after it rained, an elderly woman from the neighborhood saw the face of the commander and fainted - it had turned grotesque because the rain had distorted the carving. After that, my mother bought me paper and pencils and had me draw at home instead. My mother was skilled in calligraphy, and through her, I was able to ask some acquaintances who could paint to teach me little by little. Later, I studied at Almaty Art College and in St. Petersburg, where I developed my current painting style."

There is another important place in his artistic life his artistic life: Koryo Theater in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He worked as the chief stage artist at this theater. Although the conditions were poor at the time, with a lack of lighting and stage equipment, he was in charge of the entire stage design process, hand-painting the backdrops and costumes himself. He personally painted large stage murals measuring 5 to 10 meters and was deeply involved in the production of folktales such as "Heungbu and Nolbu." He also went on tour to places like Uzbekistan and Russia, taking full charge of setting up and dismantling props. The Koryo Theater was not just a simple performance venue. The theater was a cultural sanctuary that preserved the identity of the Koryoin community, and for him, it was both the foundation of his career as an artist and a training ground that awakened his ethnic consciousness.

"The Koryo Theater was the most important art school in my life," he said. "It was there that I learned how to breathe with the community and express history and culture through art."

The Koryo Theater modernized its stage, lighting, and sound equipment in 2023 with the support of KOICA. He expressed his deep gratitude for KOICA's support and said, "I hope that the space will continue to be a center for preserving the cultural pride of Koryoin in the future."

Gwangju Korean Village and Moon Viktor Art Museum

Gwangju, Jeollanam-do, has a special place in Moon's heart. This place is where he realized who he is and where he has come from, and it is the city that made his rebirth as an artist possible. The solo exhibition held at the Gwangju Woo Jae-ghil Art Museum in 2017, marking the 80th anniversary of the forced migration of Koryoins, became the turning point that deeply imprinted his artistic world on Korean society for the first time. His paintings were not just simple images but voices that contained the pain and history of the era.

After struggling with the aftereffects of knee joint replacement surgery in 2022, he received treatment with the help of the Gwangju Koryoin Village, and this experience led him to decide to permanently reside in Gwangju. At that time, he obtained an F-4 Overseas Korean visa to prepare for settlement, and his health significantly improved during his stay in Korea. Looking back on that time, he recalled, "As my body healed, so did my mind." He was able to pick up the brush again thanks to the medical treatment, the support of the people and the warm welcome from the community.

In 2024, he returned to Gwangju with the many paintings he had created over the years. For him, the Gwangju Koryoin Village launched a fundraising campaign in 2023 to build an art museum, and as a result, a section on the second floor of the Koryoin Village Comprehensive Support Center was created as both his studio and exhibition space. The space borne from this effort is the "Moon Viktor Art Museum."

The art museum officially opened on March 1, 2024. The opening exhibition featured his major works such as <1937 Koryoin Forced Relocation Train>, <My Grandfather in Ussuriysk>, and <General Hong Beom-do>, along with over 50 acrylic paintings being unveiled in Korea for the first time. His works, which transcend the boundaries of painting, sculpture, documentation, and testimony, are closer to reflection than mere appreciation.



• Among artist Viktor Moon's works is <Three Sisters>, a piece depicting three sisters named Faith, Hope, and Love, connected together. It embodies the hope for unity and the aspiration to live as one community.

Canvas of Memories Built with Dots

He does not leave the memories of migration and exile as merely personal narratives. <My Grandfather in Ussuriysk> is a painting created by imagining the life of his grandfather, whom he never met, and it fully expresses the longing for his Koryoin ancestors who lived without losing their ethnic identity.

"When I was a child, my mother was reluctant to share the painful memories of the forced migration with her children. This kept me from recognizing my identity as a Koryoin. It was only after I became an adult and learned that my maternal grandfather was Korean and that my family had experienced forced migration that I began to express this historical reality through art," he said.

"One of the works coming from this background is <My Grandfather in Ussuriysk>. Through this work, I imagined the life of the grandfather I never met and expressed the pain and longing of the Koryoin people. Beyond being just an art piece, I also have the desire to leave it as a valuable record that passes on the memory of forced relocation to future generations.

His paintings are created using pointillism. This method, which builds form and narrative with tens of thousands of dots, seems like an obsession with the analog in an era dominated by digital painting. "The time spent placing each dot is like meditation for me. It requires a lot of effort, but the depth it creates is equally significant," he said.

His work is an ode to "slowness" and, at the same time, a struggle with "memory." He carves the traces of Koryoins' history and survival into each dot, writing with a language that will last longer than words. Now he says, "I want to continue working in Gwangju with peace of mind. And I want to leave this path I have walked on as a painting for future generations."

His return is both a confrontation with the past and a new beginning. He is no longer a wandering artist. He is now reawakening the roots of the Koryoin on the land of Gwangju.



• Koryoin Village Specialized Street in Wolgok-dong. Cyrillic signboards stand out.

"Koryoin Village": Central Asia in Korea

Roots planted in Gwangju, village of the diaspora

Wolgok-dong in Gwangsan-gu, Gwangju, is home to some "returnees." Descendants of the Koryoin who had left for the Russian Empire but were later forced out to Central Asia are now putting down their roots here. Wolgok-dong, known as the village of the Koryoin, is a microcosm of Korea's multicultural society, where migration and return, pain and healing, and the possibility of coexistence converge. This small village, where red bricks and Russian signage coexist, holds the past 100 years of the Koryoin people within it.



• "Samsa" being baked in a Central Asian-style clay oven. It is a traditional bread from Uzbekistan

The time of the Koryoin settled in Wolgok-dong

A special time flows in Wolgok-dong, Gwangsan-gu, Gwangju. As you enter the area known as the "Koryoin Village Specialized Street," the first thing that catches your eye are the Cyrillic signboards and signs written in Russian. A scene unfolds that resembles a miniature version of a Central Asian city, with butcher shops, grocery stores, cafes, and currency exchange counters. On this street, various languages, smells, and expressions blend together, but all of them melt into one another in a way that allows for coexistence.

The presence of the Koryoin fundamentally changed the face of this region. While taking photos, I made eye contact with a few children coming out of the school gate. When I asked, "Is school out?" an Asian child and a Caucasian child simultaneously said "No" in Korean and added a few words in Russian before running to the end of the alley. Although I couldn't understand the meaning, just by their expressions and tone, I could feel the exotic vibe of the place. The feeling was difficult to explain. It was simultaneously Korean and foreign.

One person's touch builds a community

During lunch hour, the lobby of the Koryoin Village Support Center exuded a warm, homely atmosphere. The residents were gathered in small groups, busily preparing lunch. Shin Jo-ya, head of the village, asked, "What brings you here?" When I told her I was there for an interview, she said with a smile, "You're early! Why don't we start with a meal together?" She set the table herself. The table set with seaweed soup, grilled flounder, and carrot kimchi was a scene both familiar and exotic.

After the meal, refreshments were served. When I asked about the fragrant leaf tea, she smiled and said, "It's the black tea I used to drink in Uzbekistan." The Central Asian-style bread served with raspberry jam, along with the uniquely shaped cookies and nut snacks, was her way of sharing the flavors of her birthplace. For some, it may have been just a simple snack, but in that moment, it was the language of a community embracing an outsider with hospitality.

Shin Jo-ya's dedication was instrumental in shaping the present of the Koryoin Village. A third-generation Koryoin born in Uzbekistan, she settled in Gwangju in 2001 following her daughter's international marriage. When she first came to Korea, she worked at a factory to make a living and faced the harsh realities of unfamiliar systems, language barriers, and labor exploitation. But instead of turning away, she reached out - determined to pass on the small acts of help she once received to many more Koryoins.

In 2009, she founded the Koryoin Center and began offering Korean language classes, medical assistance, and life counseling. In 2015, she opened the Koryoin Comprehensive Support Center and began building a community-centered welfare system. The leadership she emphasizes is always based on "empathy" and "caring."

"This village is a community created by those who extended their hands first," she said.

Indeed, Koryoin Village is an example



• Shin Jo-ya, the head of the Koryoin Village, explaining traditional Central Asian clothing. She is the focal point of the Koryoin community, a motherly figure for the village



• <Issyk-Kul of Life>, one of the public art project works in Gwangju Koryoin Village. "Issyk-Kul" is the name of a lake in Kyrgyzstan, a place steeped in the legends of an ancient kingdom



• Koryoin Village newly transformed through the public art project

where one person's care led to the settlement of hundreds. The radio station "GBS Koryo Broadcasting" on the third floor of the center also started from her idea. It has been 10 years since they started internet broadcasting under the name "Koryo FM" and now it has expanded to FM 93.5MHz terrestrial radio. This is not just a broadcast, but an important bridge that connects the isolated diaspora* to the world.

Wall of memories, village awakened by art

In 2024, Gwangsan-gu in Gwangju, Koryoin Village, and the "Public Art Community" joined hands in launching a large-scale project that would envelop the entire village in art. This project, which aimed to create a Central Asian-themed street, involved 27 artists working in fields such as painting, sculpture, music, and video art.

Their first task was painting the faded exterior walls. One by one, the old walls and abandoned shop buildings came to life as they were covered in color. Scattered throughout the street were large sculptures depicting the "1937 Forced Relocation Train," figures dressed in traditional Koryoin attire, and tile murals featuring Central Asian patterns. Damoa Children's Park was renamed "Hong Beom-do Park," and a statue of the independence activist General Hong Beom-do was erected. Art is not just a change in aesthetics, but a "way of sharing memories." When a village of strangers comes together to share a single memory, it becomes a true community. Public art has led this transformation.

Wolgok Koryoin Cultural Center, Exhibition Hall of Memories

One of the central pillars of the spirit of Gwangju Koryoin Village is the "Wolgok Koryo Culture Center, Hall of Memories." It is not merely a museum displaying artifacts and photographs. Rather, it is more akin to a birthplace that records and bears witness to the diaspora and return of the Korean people, as well as the restoration of their identity and language.

On the first floor of the Cultural Center, there is a permanent exhibition hall arranged along the "Path of Forced Relocation." You can get a glimpse of the process by which individual memories, scattered like fragments, come together into a single line, along with the migration history of various paths bound together under the name of Koryoin. Visitors reconstruct the history of the nation through Russian textbooks used at the time, childhood photos, stage photos, and posters of the Koryo Theater.

In the Special Exhibition Hall on the second-floor, the exhibition entitled "Koryoins' Korean Literature Blossomed on the Central Asian Steppe" was being held. Not merely a retrospective, the exhibition was an attempt to explore how art has been linked to the identity of the Koryoin. The desperate expressions and experiments of the Koryo Theater artists, striving to survive under the Soviet regime, along with the Korean symbols embedded within, were fully revealed.

A special piece of music plays in the "Koryo Arirang" section, featuring an arrangement by first-generation Kazakh jazz musician Khan Yakov, set to the Arirang melody composed by Kim Byung-hak, director of the Cultural Center. The tender and wistful melody seems to say, "We have not forgotten."

An actual Kazakh nomadic traditional house stands on one side of the Cultural Center's parking lot. Its appearance is modest, but every detail, from a single piece of cloth to the color of the door frame, has been carefully recreated. It is more than just a decorative piece showing the past, but a "small homeland" symbolizing memories and longing from before the migration.

On the mural in the Cultural Center's parking lot, various ethnic groups wearing the traditional clothing of former Soviet countries are depicted. Though they remain silent, the pride conveyed through their posture and attire captures the hearts of all who look upon them. To Korean visitors, this mural is like a mirror that reminds them of "our story I didn't know" - familiar, yet unfamiliar.



• The bust of General Hong Beom-do, the spiritual pillar of Koryoins



• The traditional Kazakh nomadic house, 'Yurt,' installed in front of the parking lot at the Wolgok Koryoin Cultural Center

Landscape of Coexistence That Came Before Policies

Gwangju Koryoin Village represents so much more than just the result of immigration policies. This village offers a proof of concept for the "practice of coexistence," living together as neighbors, rather than being a "benevolent welfare" for foreign settlers.

These activities are in line with the direction of international development cooperation pursued by KOICA. It is a "collaborative connection" that remains within the realm of overseas and also looks at the lives of the diaspora, which is its root. Gwangju Koryoin Village is both a point of intersection between Korea and Central Asia and a space that offers a new perspective on official development assistance.

Currently, Koryoin Village has become a case that cities across the country are benchmarking, gaining attention as a successful model for urban regeneration, response to population decline, and migrant integration policies. As "citizens" rather than "strangers," Koryoin Village presents an answer - one that precedes words - to the question of how to include them in our shared spaces. K

*Community of people living in a place away from homeland



• The 2025 Development Cooperation Participation Strategy Briefing, aimed at providing opportunities for Korean companies to enter the global ODA market, was held on March 11 at the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises in Yeouido, Seoul.

The 2025 Development cooperation participation strategy briefing

KOICA gives Korean firms wings as they enter global ODA market

"KOICA will contribute to a sustainable ODA ecosystem, enhance Korea's national prestige, and create opportunities for Korean companies to grow globally."

On March 11, the '2025 Development Cooperation Participation Strategy Briefing' (hereinafter referred to as the Participation Strategy Briefing) was held at the KBIZ Hall of the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises in Yeouido, Seoul. In her welcoming address, Son Jeong-mi, director of KOICA's Office of Global Solidarity and Partnerships, said,"Today's development cooperation is no longer mere aid, but is increasingly being recognized as an investment for global co-prosperity and sustainable development." She added, "Matching the growth potential of developing countries with the innovative technologies and capital of Korean companies could lead to mutually explosive growth."

For Korean companies looking to enter the ODA market

Since its launch in 2017, the Participation Strategy Briefing—now in its eighth edition—has served as a platform organized by KOICA to provide information to Korean companies seeking to enter the domestic and global ODA markets.

It can be described as a "tailored, pinpoint lecture" that provides Korean companies with a wide range of information—from trends in Korea's ODA to opportunities to participate in development cooperation projects led by KOICA, the Export-Import Bank of Korea (EXIM Korea), and global Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).

The briefing was conducted in two parts. The first part focused on the theme "Participation Strategies for Korea's Grant and Concessional ODA Projects," with presentations delivered in the following order: ▲Participation strategies for KOICA's Private Sector Engagement Program ▲Participation strategies for KOICA's Corporate Partnership Program contest ▲Participation strategies for EXIM Korea's Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) ODA procurement projects. The second part continued with presentations on ▲Participation strategies in ODA projects through international organizations and MDBs ▲Participation strategies for projects of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) ▲Case studies of Korean corporations' overseas expansion through participation in global ODA projects.

Around 300 stakeholders gathered, creating a lively and enthusiastic atmosphere for the briefing session.

The steadily increasing ODA budget... Opportunities open up for participation in aid procurement projects worth 700 billion won

As the first presenter in Part 1, Jang Seo-hee, director of KOICA Procurement Team 1, introduced the procedures and tips for participating in procurement, focusing on this year's plan to issue new bids worth around 700 billion won. "ODA projects are carried out to address public issues in the governments of partner countries, so they differ from conventional business models," Jang said. "Since these projects must be implemented based on the policies of partner governments by identifying their needs, it is essential to approach them with a clear understanding of the differences between traditional business models and the procedures and methods of ODA projects."



• Jang Seo-hee, director of KOICA Procurement Team 1, presenting procurement participation procedures and tips for Korean companies



• Kim Hye-won, director of KOICA's Private Sector Engagement Program Team, explaining in detail the differences and advantages of CTS and IBS

Next, Kim Hye-won, director of KOICA's Private Sector Engagement Program Team, explained the differences between CTS and IBS, KOICA's flagship private sector cooperation programs. CTS, short for "Creative Technology Solution," is a project in which KOICA partners with startups that possess innovative technologies or products to enhance the effectiveness of aid delivery. CTS supports stage-specific cooperation for companies, ranging from SEED 0, which provides consulting to nurture aspiring entrepreneurs, to SEED 2, which offers up to 500 million won to support pilot projects in developing countries for companies that have completed their technology development. In addition, a CTS-TIPS linked project has been established, allowing SEED 1 and SEED 2 to be conducted simultaneously through a fast-track process. So far, a total of 238 companies have participated, with 123 in SEED 0, 78 in SEED 1, and 37 in SEED 2.

IBS, which stands for "Inclusive Business Solution," is a program that helps Korean companies address social issues in developing countries while uncovering greater business opportunities. This program is open small and medium-sized businesses SMBs, mid-sized companies, large corporations and even investment firms. director Kim said, "This program aims to help create a large value chain - from production and processing to sales, marketing and distribution - by linking the Korean government's key strategies with the major industries of partner countries." The biggest difference between CTS and IBS lies in the composition of the project budget. For CTS, which targets startups and early-stage companies, the entire project budget is funded by KOICA. In contrast, IBS operates as a matching fund, where companies share a portion of the project costs—typically in a 70:30 or 80:20 ratio depending on their size.

The final presenter in Part 1, Choo Jin-ho, director at EXIM Korea, introduced the methods for participating in concessional aid. Choo emphasized that concessional aid funds are conducted as loans between countries, so it is important to handle formal document exchanges through diplomatic channels. He stressed that it is crucial not to alter any details in the documents arbitrarily or omit required paperwork when submitting.

Beyond Korea, toward the world: expanding into the global market through international organizations and MDBs

As the first presenter in Part 2, Lee Kye-cheon, project manager of KODABIZ, emphasized the need for Korean companies to pay close attention to the ODA international procurement market conducted through the Korean Trust Fund established at MDBs such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, of which Korea is a member.

KODABIZ, the short name for the "KOICA ODA Business Support Center" provides various services for companies interested in expanding overseas, including ▲information on bidding opportunities in the global ODA market ▲capacity-building training for global ODA entry ▲consulting and proposal review ▲support for overseas marketing and vendor matching. Lee said, "Last year alone, Korean companies secured over $10 million in global ODA projects through KODABIZ services. I hope that many more companies will take advantage of KODABIZ services this year as well."

Lee Jae-jin, head of the Korea Office at CABEI (Central American Bank for Economic Integration), also took the stage as a presenter, encouraging Korean companies to enter the Latin American ODA market. "The CABEI Korea Trust Fund projects offer certain advantages to Korean companies in the procurement and bidding process," Lee said, "As the Central American market is expected to offer more opportunities, especially in infrastructure development, I look forward to the active participation of many companies." She predicted that opportunities would go to companies that have thoroughly studied the Central American region.

Successful companies entering the ODA market: "Through KOICA, we confirmed local needs and marketability."

Toward the end of the event, two leading companies that successfully entered the ODA market through KOICA shared their success stories. Dot, founded in 2015, is a social venture that provides tactile device products and services for the visually impaired. The company has launched products such as a braille smartwatch and tactile pads. Kim Ji-eun, assistant manager at Dot, took the stage as a presenter to explain the key to their successful entry into the ODA market, saying, "Through KOICA's CTS program, Dot was able to verify whether its products really had social value and market potential, and to develop products and services tailored to local needs."

Im Eung-soo, vice president of Moon Engineering Co. Ltd., said, "KOICA's risk management advisory was a great help in our business in developing countries." Moon Engineering, founded in 1990, is a specialized ICT consulting firm and is considered a "small but strong" company, with sales reaching 35 billion won as of 2023. The company first entered the ODA sector in 2010 and expanded its business scope by securing its first KOICA project in 2015.

Vice President Im said, "Although Moon Engineering is a well-established and recognized company in Korea, there are many risks in developing countries, such as political instability and exchange rate fluctuations, which can lead to project interruptions. In reality, it's difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises to handle these challenges on their own." He emphasized the necessity of building an internal risk management system with the advisory support of specialized organizations like KOICA.

The participants remained engaged in discussions even outside the event hall. The booth set up by KOICA outside the venue for individual consultations and promotion of participating companies was inundated with visitors. A total of 20 companies took part in the consulting on the day of the event, and 103 companies participated in the online consulting that followed the next day.

A KOICA official said that it plans to take a more proactive approach in expanding the participation of Korean companies in the ODA market in the future, adding, "KOICA will do its best to ensure that Korean companies can participate in the vast international aid procurement market and reap the dual benefits of spreading global social value and contributing to the growth of Korea."



• Outside the venue of the '2025 Development Cooperation Participation Strategy Briefing,' company representatives conducted consultations for the event participants.

Mini Interview 1

"Offering need-based solutions for disabled in developing nations"



Kim Ji-eun, Assistant Manager at Dot

Q What KOICA program did Dot participate in?

There are two main ones. In 2017, Dot developed a solution through the CTS SEED 1 and 2 programs, and in 2023, the company was selected for the export-leading pilot procurement project, which was jointly organized by KOICA and the Public Procurement Service. Through the CTS program, Dot successfully developed the low-cost braille reader "Dot Mini" for the visually impaired. Dot has commercialized this product and successfully distributed 300 units to schools for the visually impaired in Kenya and India. After being selected for the Public Procurement Service's pilot procurement project, the company distributed 40 units of Dot Pad, a learning support device for the visually impaired, to the ALAC School for the Visually Impaired under the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education in Cambodia.

Q What kind of support did Dot receive from KOICA?

First, in the pilot procurement project, Dot worked together with KOICA's Shared Growth Team throughout the process, from planning to reporting results. Thanks to this support, Dot was able to focus solely on the core of the project without much difficulty. In addition, KOICA's Cambodia Office actively helped identify local organizations with demands and took charge of communication, which allowed Dot to carry out local promotion, training, feedback collection, and monitoring without major issues.

Q Braille differs from country to country. Did you face any difficulties during the development process?

Braille varies from country to country, and some languages are difficult to braille due to their linguistic characteristics, so the level of difficulty varies as well. A typical example is Khmer, which is used in Cambodia. Currently, it is impossible to implement Khmer braille 100% accurately with any braille engine available on the market except Dot. Dot took on the project, which required close consultation with local partners such as the Cambodian Department of Special Education (DSE) and universities. In this process, KOICA played a significant role by directly engaging in discussions with the DSE and helping to persuade them throughout the process.

Q Any other memorable moments you'd like to share?

It was when I visited Uzbekistan to explore additional demand. Dot, the Uzbek Ministry of Education, and the KOICA Office signed an MOU, and I remember the adviser to the Uzbek Minister of Education saying, "Most products provided through ODA are often those that have been used in developed countries and later flow into Uzbekistan over time. However, Korea specifically identified the local demands and situation and developed a customized solution. I really appreciate it." I felt proud that the efforts of Dot and KOICA to develop and distribute products that meet local demands and circumstances were recognized.

Q Does Dot have any plans to take part in KOICA projects in the future?

Dot plans to actively explore overseas markets by utilizing KODABIZ services to expand into international organizations. Dot also hopes to receive KOICA's support in identifying new projects. Additionally, the company plans to participate in KOICA's IBS program in the future.



• A teacher at the Royal Academy for the Blind in Jordan feels the Jordanian national flag using Dot pad, developed by Dot, the social venture firm for the visually impaired.

Mini Interview 2

"KOICA gave us info laws and administration in different countries"



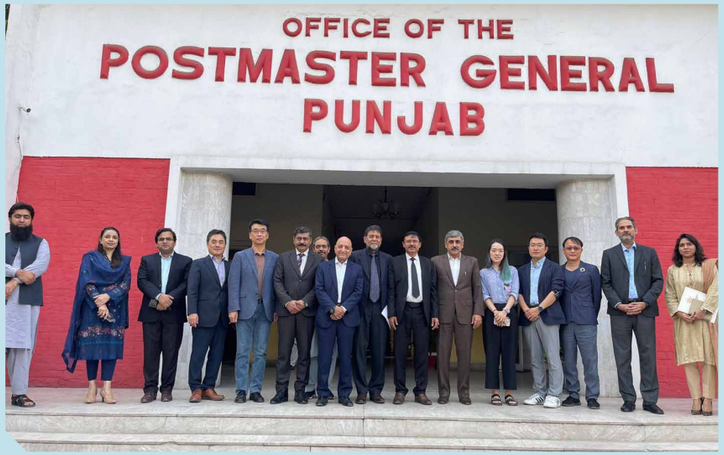
Im Eung-soo, Vice President of Moon Engineering

Q Please tell us what led Moon Engineering to participate in KOICA's program.
Moon Engineering, which has provided various ICT solutions such as e-government, smart cities, and disaster management, planned to expand globally for sustainable growth. Since developing countries have different situations and higher risks, the company decided to seek help from KODABIZ.

Q What do you mean by risks?
Due to the unstable political and economic situations in many developing countries, projects can sometimes be delayed or even halted because of sudden regime changes or shifts in government. Sudden fluctuations in exchange rates can also have a significant impact. Differences in tax systems and administrative procedures between countries can lead to small mistakes that result in large additional costs and time consumption.

Q What kind of help has Moon Engineering received?
Through KODABIZ, Moon Engineering has developed overall capabilities in securing and executing international projects, including risk management strategies. In particular, it has been very helpful to receive information about projects of international organizations and assistance in consulting and writing proposals leading to bids. Advice on the procurement standards of international organizations and local conditions minimized trial and error.

Q Are there any examples where support was particularly helpful?
In one country, the project was in danger of being delayed due to the complexity of administrative procedures. The company tried to discuss the issue directly with local government officials, but the process did not go well. At that time, with the help of KOICA's local office, we were able to clearly understand the local laws and administration, which allowed us to resolve the issue. Language and cultural barriers also posed significant challenges for a project in the African region.
Even then, with the help of the volunteers dispatched by KOICA, we were able to understand the local customs and culture and solve the problems. Additionally, it was difficult to determine whom to trust when hiring locally, but with KOICA's support, we were able to gain networking opportunities and find the right experts.



• Moon Engineering, an ICT consulting firm, helped modernize the public postal service at the Office of the Postmaster General in Lahore. The photo shows Moon Engineering employees with their local counterparts.

Q Is there anything you hope for from KOICA?
Since KOICA's support has been a great help to our business, we hope that the scope of support will be expanded so that more companies can benefit from it. In addition, it would be great if there were follow-up support for companies that have successfully secured and won bids. I'm sure that if there is an official support network or system to assist in the project implementation and maintenance process, Korean companies will be able to achieve even greater results. K



• The world's first geostationary environmental satellite, Cheollian 2B, can measure air pollution in the Asian region in real time.

Pan-Asia Partnership for Geospatial Air Pollution Information

Transboundary air pollution: eight Asian countries respond jointly through Pandora

In February 2020, Korea successfully launched the world's first geostationary environmental satellite, Cheollian 2B. A geostationary satellite orbits the Earth at an altitude of approximately 36,000 km, traveling at the same speed as the Earth's rotation. The satellite can measure the distribution and movement of air pollutants in the Asian region in real time, about eight times a day. Its coverage extends beyond Korea. It observes the entire Asian continent, spanning 5,000 km, from neighboring Japan to Indonesia, India, and Mongolia. In the same year, KOICA launched the Pan-Asia Partnership for Geospatial Air Pollution Information (PAPGAPI) initiative. A large-scale project with an investment of $4 million (approx. 5.8 billion won) over five years resulted in the installation of 20 Pandora surface-based observation devices across Asia and the creation of an air quality information platform integrated with satellite data.
This project was established to create a system for Asian countries to share air quality data and collaborate on solutions. KOICA, together with the Korea National Institute of Environmental Research, Korea Environment Corporation, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), formed a four-party collaboration, with the governments of eight countries, including Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines, joining the initiative. In this project, KOICA oversaw the overall operation, performance management, and

coordination among stakeholders. The National Institute of Environmental Research provided data observed from the environmental satellite to Asian countries, took charge of establishing the ground observation network, and operated the Asia Technical Center. Korea Environment Corporation installed the Pandora equipment and was responsible for overseeing its pilot operation to ensure the equipment functioned properly in each country.

UNESCAP identified the policy needs of each country and supported the development of strategies to improve air quality. UNESCAP also conducted local training to ensure the practical use of satellite and equipment data, with a focus on capacity building. Tiziana Bonapace, director of the Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division at UNESCAP, who has been in charge of the capacity-building aspect of this project, discussed the significance, outcomes, and future sustainability of the project. Below is the Q&A.





• Representatives from countries participating in the project to build a joint platform for the Asian environmental satellite in 2022 pose for a photo while receiving training for 'Pandora' equipment.

Q What was the background behind launching this project?

The starting point of this project was the recognition that effectively addressing air pollution in the Asia-Pacific region requires the capacity to integrate space-based data with ground sensor data. Satellite data can observe wide areas, while ground data plays a key role in enhancing its reliability.

The core of this project is to connect these two types of data to establish a practical air pollution monitoring and management system. While Korea operates over 870 air quality monitoring stations nationwide, Cambodia has only 14 and Thailand 96. This is far from sufficient, especially when it comes to monitoring transboundary air pollution.

The current situation makes comprehensive monitoring a challenge. To bridge this gap, it is essential to integrate data from satellites and ground-based instruments to regularly monitor air quality not only in urban areas, but also in rural and border regions. In 2019, the Korean government announced its plan to share satellite data with Asian countries, and this project is the result of fulfilling that commitment.

Q Compared to individual countries utilizing their own satellites, what is the biggest advantage of this platform?

First, by sharing satellite use through a platform like this one, countries can access high-quality data at a much lower cost. Another advantage is data accuracy. To effectively utilize satellite data, it must be validated and calibrated using ground-based measurements. When multiple countries validate the data individually and share the results, the reliability of the satellite data increases. That's the true strength of the platform.

Q What types of data are collected and shared through the satellite?

The Geostationary Environment Monitoring Spectrometer (GEMS) measures the concentration of all major pollutants, including surface-level ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, aerosols (PM), and formaldehyde.

Data collected by GEMS is converted into various satellite datasets by analyzing the sunlight absorption characteristics of atmospheric compounds or airborne particles through signals reflected from the Earth's surface.

Q What are the tangible benefits of the platform?

Through the KOICA project, participating countries can now access satellite data in real time for free every day. This is a significant change. Additionally, to validate and calibrate the satellite data according to local environments, the ground-based observation equipment, Pandora, has also been used. As a result, the reliability of the data has improved. From an environmental perspective, it has become possible to analyze not only localized air pollution in major cities but also the flow of air pollutants at the national level, seasonal trends, and even the transboundary movement of air pollutants caused by volcanic activities. Countries that have previously struggled to collect or analyze such data can now establish policies based on scientific evidence, thanks to the environment that has been created.



• Tiziana Bonaface, Director of the ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division at UNESCAP

Q What were the biggest challenges in implementing this project while working with multiple Asian countries?

Air pollution is a highly sensitive topic, and each country had different circumstances and perspectives. Since it is a transboundary issue, it was not easy to reach a consensus on accountability and solutions. In particular, each country has different administrative procedures and decision-making structures, making it difficult to coordinate with multiple countries simultaneously. Although plans were made and agreements reached, unexpected issues arose during implementation. Another challenge was the difference in technological infrastructure. To effectively use satellite-measured air quality data, digital equipment, personnel, and technology are needed, but many countries lack this infrastructure. So, the goal of this project was not just to share satellite data, but to establish a system that enables the effective use of air pollution data.

Q What is the significance of the platform built by Korea in the Asia region?

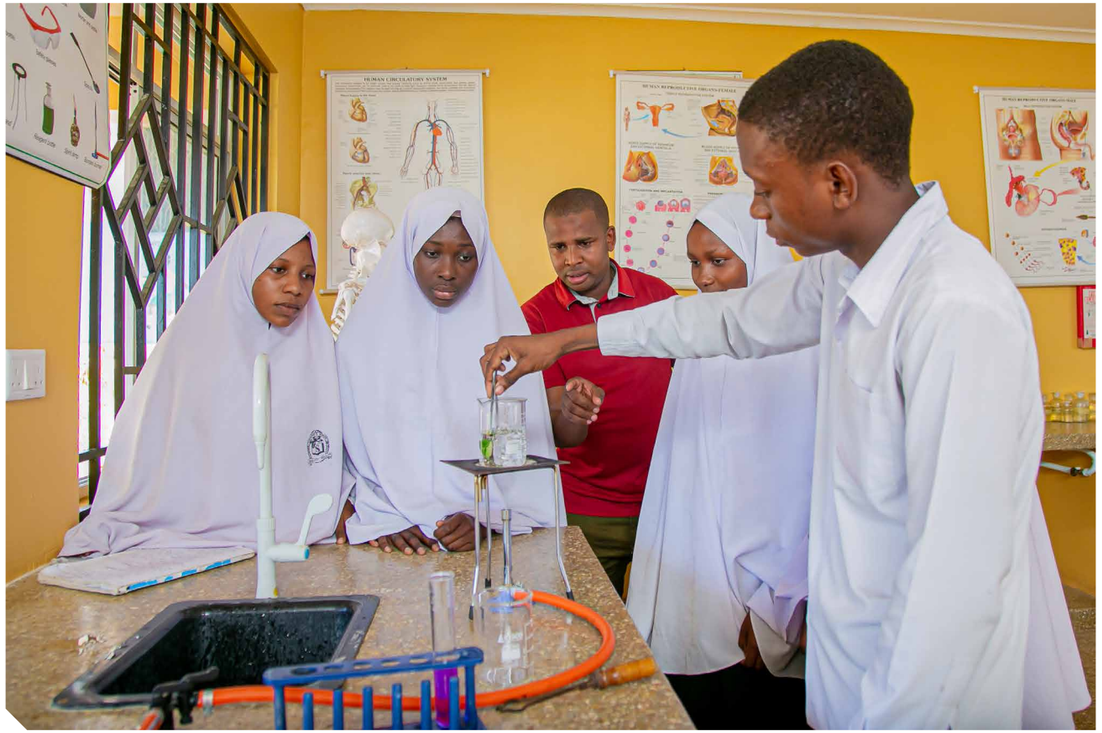
Korea is not just a country with the technology to launch satellites. Korea has a very high level of understanding of air quality and has accumulated expertise on how to connect related data to policies. Thanks to this capability, Korea has also achieved the result of regularizing intergovernmental dialogues on air pollution issues in the Asia-Pacific region. As a result, I believe Korea has made a tangible contribution to air quality management in Asia, while also expanding its role in the fields of environmental and science diplomacy.

Q What are the future strategies for ensuring the platform's long-term sustainability?

Since air pollution knows no borders, in order for Asia-Pacific countries to respond collectively, it is necessary to standardize the response systems of each country. It's not enough to simply provide equipment. To ensure that each country can properly understand and respond to air pollution using satellite data, it is necessary to provide systematic manuals and learning pathways. A comprehensive toolkit is required, including not only technology but also workforce training.

Korea made a significant contribution to the Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution (RAPAP), which was adopted by UNESCAP member states in 2022. Since then, UNESCAP launched the Partnership and Coordination Platform in March, which serves as the implementation framework for RAPAP.

This platform will serve to support countries in sharing data and building capacities together in the future. This platform, together with the Pandora Asia Network, will become a key foundation for the sustainable monitoring of air pollution and collaborative response across Asia. K



• Students in Zanzibar, Tanzania, are conducting a science experiment using equipment inside a lab provided and built through a KOICA project.

Ehhancing the Quality of Secondary School Education through Holistic Approach in Zanzibar, Tanzania

Educational innovation experiment in Zanzibar to foster national talent

Only a few years ago, a classroom at a secondary school in Zanzibar, Tanzania, had a dirt floor, worn-out desks and well-thumbed textbooks. The classroom is now equipped with desks and chairs that allow students to study comfortably, an ICT-integrated learning environment, and laboratory equipment. This is thanks to the "The Project for Enhancing the Quality of Secondary School Education through holistic approach in Zanzibar, Tanzania," which has been implemented by KOICA since 2018. This project, which invested a budget of $10 million (approximately 13 billion won) over seven years until 2024, aimed at providing comprehensive support, including strengthening teacher capacity, improving educational infrastructure, and expanding community involvement. It focused on building schools or providing equipment and also on transforming the educational methods of both students and teachers.

Enhancing the quality of learning

The secondary education system in Zanzibar, Tanzania, has long struggled with low learning outcomes. In particular, the teaching methods of local teachers were limited to rote learning, and there was a lack of student-centered and participatory approaches. To address these problems, KOICA carried out projects focusing on developing student-centered educational methodologies, operating teacher training programs, and strengthening the Teacher Centers. "As secondary education has focused on quantitative expansion, there has been a lack of policies on improving the quality of teaching," an official with the Zanzibar Ministry of Education and Vocational Training said. "The KOICA project has provided teachers with methods they can apply in real classrooms and has helped parents and the community participate in school management."

Teacher training is one of the key components of the project. The goal is to break away from the traditional rote learning approach and introduce "learner-centered pedagogy," enabling students to think more independently and take the lead in their learning. To this end, more than 1,000 teachers received training at 10 Teacher Centers across the region. The 40 master trainers and 125 resource trainers trained through the program are now playing a key role in imparting the new teaching methods to their fellow teachers.

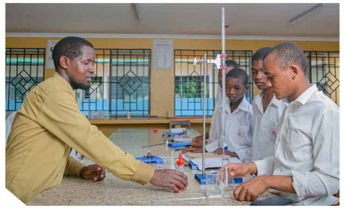
Laying the foundation for education

Poor learning environments were also a major factor in lowering the quality of education. Worn-out and insufficient teaching materials, science labs lacking experimental equipment, and a shortage of classroom space all contributed to the decline in students' learning outcomes. To address this issue, KOICA launched an environmental improvement project aimed at improving the teaching environment in secondary schools, strengthening the infrastructure of Teacher Centers, and creating science laboratories and ICT learning spaces.

So far, facilities such as science labs and libraries at over 20 schools have been renovated, and the learning environment has been improved through the integration of ICT. Learning materials have also been provided to each school. In consideration of students' health, bathroom facilities and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure have been established. Thanks to these facilities, female students have been able to attend school consistently without needing to take breaks.



• A science lab built by KOICA in Zanzibar



• A teacher who has completed his training program with KOICA in Zanzibar is showing students how to use science laboratory instruments.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, radio-based educational broadcasts were provided to fill the educational gap caused by school closures. KOICA, noting that the radio penetration rate (62.4%) is much higher than the TV penetration rate (39.6%) and that most households with teenagers have radios, collaborated with the Ministry of Education and broadcasting stations to produce educational programs immediately after the school closure order. In 2021, solar-powered radios and solar charging stations were also distributed.

Working with local communities to manage schools

The transformation of education does not happen only in the classroom. KOICA focused on revitalizing the School Management Committee (SMC) to enable the local community to participate in improving education. KOICA noted that the sustainability of education is ensured when a school is not just a space for teachers and students, but a part of the community created in collaboration with the local population.

The SMC is composed of teachers, parents, and local community leaders, and it plays a role in providing input on school management and student education. KOICA provided training on school management monitoring methods for these members and introduced the "School Quality Report," enabling the community to directly assess the quality of education at schools. Parents said, "We never knew we could directly participate in improving the school environment. We now truly realize that our children's education is the key to the community's development."

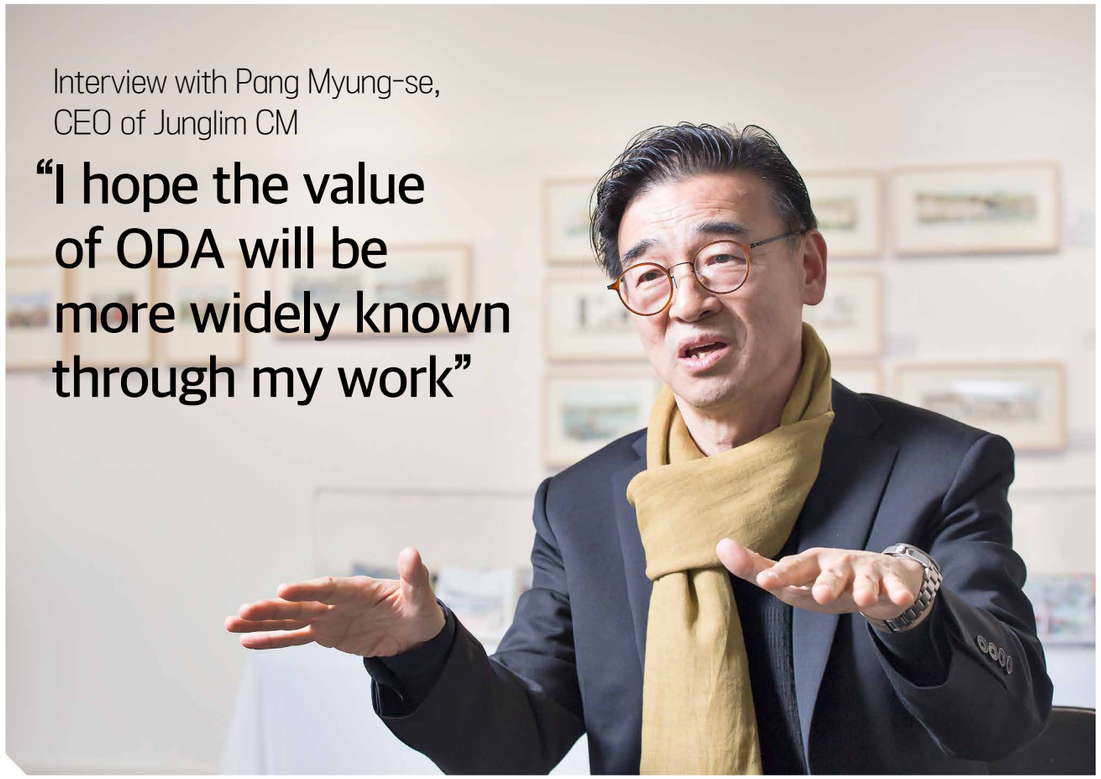
The most notable change through this project is the improvement in students' achievement.

Zanzibar's basic education is a 12-year program. According to data published by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, the enrollment rate for general secondary schools (Form 1-4) is 74.4%, with 115,352 students enrolled. This is a significant scale compared to the 8,628 students enrolled in private schools. However, according to the analysis of exam results by the ministry, the pass rate for the Form 4 graduation exam in public schools was significantly lower than that in private schools, highlighting the urgent need to reform public education. As a result of the project, achievement levels in English, mathematics, and science for Form 4 students at the target schools significantly improved, and student satisfaction also increased.

KOICA is supporting the government in institutionalizing the teacher training program as a policy to ensure the sustainability of the school management system. KOICA plans to continue collaborating with the Tanzanian government to expand the teacher training programs using the School Quality Report system and Teacher Centers across Zanzibar.

Interview with Pang Myung-se,
CEO of Junglim CM

“I hope the value of ODA will be more widely known through my work”



• Pang Myung-se, CEO of Junglim CM

Pang Myung-se, the CEO of Junglim CM, is a ‘veteran’ who has participated in various ODA construction projects, such as health centers, schools, and museums, mainly in developing countries around the world, in collaboration with KOICA. Even before Junglim CM spun off from Junglim Architecture in 2023, CEO Pang had already participated in KOICA projects, and for over 20 years, he has consistently contributed to KOICA’s ODA construction projects and achieved meaningful results. In April of this year, he held his first solo exhibition, titled “Another Perspective,” in Insa-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul. The exhibition featured a collection of his sketches and notes depicting vivid scenes of construction sites and the people within them, based on what he saw and experienced during his KOICA business trips overseas.



• A sketch by Junglim CM CEO Pang Myung-se of Caracol Garment Technology Center in Haiti, with the construction 50 percent complete.

Q Congratulations on your first solo exhibition! What inspired you to hold this exhibition?

For the past 20 years, I’ve had the habit of taking notes and making sketches in my notebook while traveling abroad for business. Most of them were written and drawn on site while participating in KOICA projects, and I gradually prepared a solo exhibition, wondering what it would be like to share these works with many people. Last year, while participating in an ODA project to build a hospital in a city located at an altitude of 4,100 meters, I sketched the people at the project site during a meeting and showed it to them, and they really liked it.

Q What motivates you to consistently participate in KOICA’s ODA projects that support developing countries?

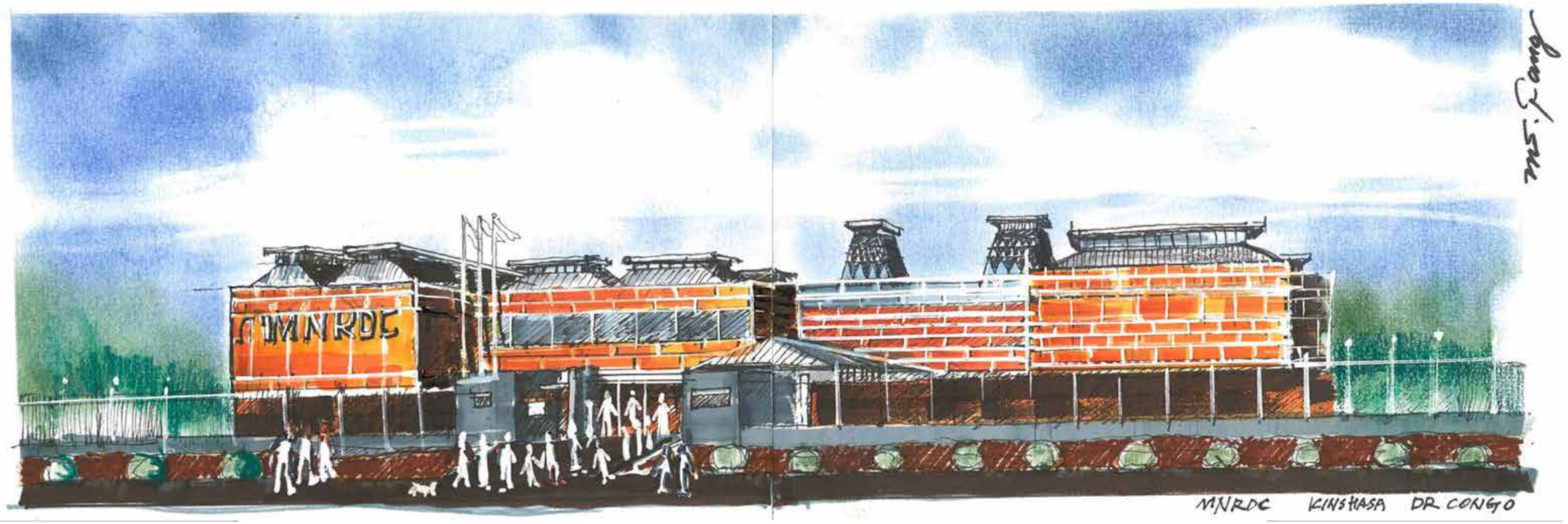
My company’s mission is to create a world where we live together by fostering healthy spatial environments. As a for-profit company, of course, we have to consider financial benefits, but we also strive to make ongoing social contributions for a world where we live together. We plan to maintain this direction in the future as well.



• Korea-Colombia Friendship Inclusive Rehabilitation Center before the preliminary completion inspection

Q Of all the facilities that you have built with KOICA in different regions, which one is the most memorable?

I have traveled to various regions, from Latin America, such as Haiti, to the Middle East and North Africa. In fact, all the buildings we constructed were essential facilities that were indispensable to the lives of the local people. That’s why it’s very difficult to choose just one. For example, in Colombia, we built the Korea-Colombia Friendship Inclusive Rehabilitation Center. Colombia is the only Latin American country that sent troops to the Korean War. Since they helped us when we were struggling in the past, it is now our turn to help them. As many of you know, Colombia is not a very safe place. It is common for local soldiers and police officers to risk their lives fighting against large criminal organizations. There are often gunfights, and soldiers and police officers sometimes lose their arms or legs to landmines planted by these criminal groups. The Korea-Colombia Friendship Rehabilitation Center is a facility that treats and helps rehabilitate local soldiers and police officers who were injured while fighting against criminal organizations. Here, they find hope in life by participating in various activities such as swimming, taekwondo, and fencing. We feel a great sense of fulfillment in our work when we see soldiers



• The National Museum of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Built as a museum, it is also used for state events such as African summits and as an experiential learning space for students.

and police officers regain their smiles as they undergo rehabilitation at the center. For this exhibition, we displayed sketches depicting scenes from the Korea-Colombia Friendship Rehabilitation Center.

Q I heard that you took part in a meaningful project in Paraguay as well.

I participated in several projects in Paraguay, and one of them was building an aviation training center near the capital city, Asunción, inside the international airport, where we could share Korean aviation technology. Paraguay is one of the major landlocked countries in Central and South America, so it has no access to the sea, which makes trade difficult and causes its economy to lag behind those of neighboring countries. Therefore, landlocked countries inevitably have a strong need for aviation professionals, such as pilots and maintenance engineers. The aviation training center we built in Paraguay served as a hub for transferring Korean aviation technology and greatly contributed to improving the local aviation education infrastructure. One unforgettable project we undertook in Paraguay was the construction of a health center in Limpio, Central Department, during a period when the world was in turmoil due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the region was facing a shortage of medical facilities. This area had difficulty accessing even basic medical services, so building a health center was urgently needed. Although the work was not easy due to the pandemic, we managed to build as many as 20 health facilities even under difficult circumstances, creating an environment where local residents could receive quality medical services.

Q Construction work abroad seems very different from domestic work. What is it like?

In Korea, construction infrastructure is so well developed that buildings can be built quickly and easily. However, in many of the countries where we participate in projects, such infrastructure is often not available at all. We often encounter challenging situations, such as problems with building materials and difficulties communicating with local people. When we built the sewing vocational training center in Haiti, we had to collaborate with other international organizations, which often caused delays even during the communication stage, and coordinating opinions was not easy. This experience still remains vivid in my memory.

Q How are architectural beauty and practicality balanced when constructing buildings in developing countries?

The most important thing is to build something that serves its intended functions, and if it also features a design suited to the local culture and climate, it can become an even better facility. A prime example is the National Museum of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For this museum, we did our best to create a design that reflects the African climate and regional characteristics while also expressing the unique identity of Congo.

Q What message did you hope to convey to people through this exhibition?

First of all, I wanted to let people know how many meaningful things are being done by so many people in remote areas overseas, and how we are working internationally. Since there are still many people who are not familiar with ODA projects or KOICA projects, I wanted to raise more awareness about these aspects. I also hoped that not only Junglim CM's experts who participated in this project, but also the designers, KOICA staff, and all related professionals would feel a sense of pride. It is truly important to have pride in the work they do.

Q Do you have any advice for junior architects who want to work on ODA projects?

Through participating in ODA projects, I realized that architecture is truly a meaningful endeavor. For people living in challenging environments, a well-built structure can be like a lifeline. I have a sketch that I drew when the Korean medical volunteer group visited the building that we constructed in Haiti. During the week that the group stayed, 3,000 patients came. With 500 patients coming each day, that small building played a truly significant role. Architecture is about saving lives, so I hope we never forget that the work we do is truly meaningful.

Q What are your plans for the future?

I am planning to compile my travel journals, storybooks, and field sketches that I have recorded over the past 20 years into a book. My goal is to publish it either this winter or next spring. K

Contribution by Som SomNeang, a local staff member of the KOICA Cambodia office

A bridge between Cambodia and Korea



• 2023 Completion Ceremony for the KOICA Cambodia 160th WFK Volunteers (The person in the white t-shirt on the far right is me)

The success story of a migrant worker who returned home in glory after working in Korea has become quite common. In 2014, I also set foot on Korean soil for the first time, filled with great ambition. Then in my early 20s, I worked at electrical and food factories in the Gyeonggi-do and Incheon areas. I was fortunate enough to meet many good people at the factories. The bosses had great personalities, and my colleagues were friendly, so I was able to work without much difficulty, even in a foreign country. Five years later, when my work visa was about to expire and it was time to return to Cambodia, I felt regretful, but I made a firm promise to myself that I would definitely come back, remembering Korea's warm hospitality. I didn't forget that promise, and even after returning to Cambodia, I studied Korean diligently. Thanks to that, I got another opportunity to return to Korea. I was able to study at the Global Language Center of Bucheon University. The Korea I returned to was still a warm place. The two years I spent studying with my friends, experiencing, and feeling Korea, remain the happiest moments of my life. I wanted to stay in Korea for a long time, but I had no choice but to stop my studies and return to Cambodia because something unexpected happened at home, and I was deeply saddened.

When the plans suddenly fell apart, I felt lost and overwhelmed. The dream I had promised myself to achieve in Korea seemed out of reach, and I was worried about what I could do in the future. Along the way, I heard about 'KOICA' from someone I knew. KOICA is a Korean government agency with an office in Cambodia, where Korean staff are dispatched to offer assistance in various fields. I went to Korea to get rich, but they left behind their comfortable lives in Korea to come and help Cambodia! I was amazed, and at the same time, I felt a strong desire to support them.

I applied to the KOICA Cambodia Office and joined at the end of 2022. I have now been working as a local staff member for three years. At KOICA's overseas offices, Korean staff members work alongside local employees who are well-versed in the circumstances of their own country. At the Cambodia office, 13 local staff members, including myself, are supporting KOICA's projects. In particular, at the Cambodia Office, there are 35 large and small projects underway in fields such as education, health, and rural development, so the role of local staff is crucial.

My main task is to help 20 World Friends Korea Volunteers and 52 Youth Mid-Term Volunteers adapt to the unfamiliar environment in Cambodia. For example, I carefully assist them with all the necessary aspects of local life, such as visa issuance, opening bank accounts, and setting up mobile phones, staying by their side like a close friend. I received a lot of help from Koreans when I was in Korea, and now I feel proud to be able to help Koreans in return.

The volunteers I have met here come from a wide range of professions and personalities, from IT technicians to teachers. I am truly grateful to the Koreans who came to my country with a strong willingness to help others using their talents. So, I organized special sessions to help them understand the local culture more easily. I asked my professor at the Department of Korean Language at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) to give monthly lectures on Cambodian holidays, etiquette, language, and social characteristics. As a result, we held a course called the 'Understanding Cambodian Culture Session.' I had my own experiences of being confused when I first went to Korea because I didn't know about the customs, manners, and daily habits.

Thanks to the professor's knowledge of both Korean and Cambodian cultures and his detailed explanations of the differences between the two countries, the volunteers were able to adjust to Cambodia more quickly. In addition to the lectures, various hands-on programs, such as visits to cultural heritage sites and cooking Cambodian dishes, were organized, which greatly increased the volunteers' satisfaction. I was also happy to see the volunteers expressing their gratitude, saying, "The useful course has been a great help in adapting to life in Cambodia." The volunteers who are active in various places across the region always make sure to visit me and express their gratitude whenever they come to the Office. Each time, I am grateful and happy to realize that my work is of great help to someone. Moreover, they love Cambodia more than anyone else. Isn't it amazing that I get to work with people who love Cambodia as much as I love Korea?



• Cultural Exploration by the 160th WFK Volunteers

Last year, I enrolled in the Department of Korean Language at the Royal University of Phnom Penh to help them even more. Balancing my studies with administrative tasks such as visas and taxes, in addition to my duties for the volunteers, is not easy. However, I am studying hard, managing my limited time, with the hope that as I become more proficient in Korean, I will be able to resolve the volunteers' difficulties more quickly than I do now. After graduation, if possible, I would like to pursue a master's degree in Korea.

I would like to improve my language skills and also gain a deeper understanding of Korean culture so that I can work for both Korea and Cambodia. I no longer envy those who bought land and buildings with the money they earned in Korea. The pride I feel in being someone who bridges the two countries is far greater than the wealth of those with large sums of money.



• 2024 Cambodia Korea Alumni Association-WFK Volunteers Joint Social Activity



• Alexander Mootoo, Political Counsellor at the French Embassy in Korea, giving a presentation on France's ODA in the KOICA Lounge at the International Cooperation Center(ICC)

France's ODA as told by French Embassy officials

"ODA is a form of solidarity to address the common challenges of humanity"

The French Embassy in Korea shared France's Official Development Assistance (ODA) strategy in the KOICA Lounge at the International Cooperation Center(ICC) in Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do, on April 2. Mr. Alexander Mootoo, Political Counsellor, and Mr. Félix Hovakimian, Macroeconomics and Finance attaché, both at the French Embassy in Korea, offered clear explanations on the evolution of France's ODA and its future plans. The key theme of the day was "climate." France now views ODA not merely as financial support but as a strategic tool to address the global climate crisis. In particular, Mr. Mootoo emphasized the possibility of collaboration with the Republic of Korea, suggesting that cooperation between the two countries could reach a new level. The following is a summary of the presentation.

From aid to partnership: France's ODA

In the past, ODA was seen as developed countries unilaterally assisting developing countries. To put it simply, it involved providing funds, building roads, and transferring technology. There was a clear hierarchy between donor and recipient countries, and ODA was based on this structure. However, ODA for France today is somewhat different. France views aid not as an act of granting grace, but as part of a "responsible partnership." This is why terms like "strategy" and "responsibility" are commonplace.

France seeks to jointly design and implement solutions to global challenges through ODA. In 2023, France disbursed approximately $15 billion in ODA, making it the fifth-largest donor in the world. However, French ODA cannot be explained by numbers alone. Since President Emmanuel Macron's inauguration in 2017, France has increased its budget while also shifting the direction of its ODA policy.

In the past, infrastructure development was the focus of ODA, but now the emphasis has shifted to environmental sectors such as renewable energy, climate adaptation, carbon reduction, and water management. France seeks to be a partner that plans strategies jointly with recipient nations to address the shared problem of the climate crisis, rather than simply a country sending construction equipment.

France taking the lead in tackling the climate crisis

The French government has pledged to the international community more than $6.5 billion a year in climate-related ODA by 2025, and it has already exceeded this target. Currently, about 60% of France's climate ODA is allocated to "mitigation" projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while the remaining 40% is directed toward "adaptation" projects that address climate disasters such as floods and droughts, whilst strengthening recipient communities' resilience. In doing so, France has redefined the nature of ODA - not as simple sharing, but as the distribution of international climate responsibility.

France also distinguishes itself from other donor countries in its approach to implementation. More than 90% of France's climate ODA is managed through bilateral agreements, meaning it signs direct contracts with individual recipient countries. This is a significantly higher proportion than contributions through multilateral organizations (such as the IMF, World Bank, EU, regional development banks etc.), highlighting France's ODA approach of sharing leadership with partner countries. It is a method where, from the early stages of project design, the donor and recipient countries define the problem together and jointly seek appropriate solutions.

An example that best illustrates this implementation strategy is the "Koolboks" project in Nigeria. It is an initiative to distribute solar-powered refrigerators to rural areas with unreliable electricity supply. The refrigerators are designed to maintain cooling for up to four days even without sunlight. By ensuring the stable storage of food and medicine, the project has improved both the quality of life and the health environment for local residents. This project provided tangible benefits to around 60,000 residents, while reducing carbon emissions by over 90% compared to traditional diesel-powered refrigerators. At the same time, it created about 70 local jobs, generating economic ripple effects.

This structure, where technology, environment, and economy are organically connected, symbolically represents the future vision of ODA that France advocates. France is proving through actual projects that it is not just a supplier, but a partner that jointly designs the conditions for survival and self-reliance.

Diplomacy in an era of shared responsibility

Through this presentation, France clearly expressed its willingness to cooperate with the Republic of Korea. "France and the Republic of Korea have different paths of growth, but now both bear similar responsibilities in the international community," said Political Counsellor, Alexander Mootoo. "Both countries understand well that development and prosperity do not happen on their own. In this regard, Korea is a very interesting partner for cooperation."

It is clear why France views the Republic of Korea as a viable partner. The Republic of Korea has a valuable experience of transitioning from a recipient to a donor of aid, and recently, its interest in climate and green ODA has significantly increased. France is exploring various avenues to expand its partnership with KOICA. The two countries have been engaging in strategic discussions and sharing information on areas of mutual interest, and are expected to identify more concrete opportunities for collaboration in the future.

President Macron once stated, "No country needs to choose between development and protecting the planet." France adopts this not as a mere slogan, but as the fundamental direction of its policy. This effort to share technology and finance in the fight against the climate crisis, and to jointly design the future of the international community, is now redefining the concept of ODA. ODA is no longer a simple act of sharing; it has become a form of solidarity that divides collective responsibility whilst illustrating international action and leadership. France aims to write the next chapter of this solidarity together with the Republic of Korea.



• A commemorative photo with KOICA officials

Mini Interview

“Korea is committed to expanding ODA”



Alexander Mootoo, Political Counsellor at the French Embassy in Korea

Q Which programs do you primarily support in relation to climate change response?
We mainly provide support focused on sustainable transportation and renewable energy. Our primary focus is on middle- and low-income countries. I have previous experience advising on climate change response projects in Indonesia and the Philippines. In the Philippines, France implemented a project that incorporated eco-friendly elements into improving urban mobility to address the severe traffic congestion in Manila for example.



• French Embassy officials visiting the KOICA Exhibition Hall

Q The United States has recently been reducing its ODA budget. What are your thoughts on this, and what are your expectations for cooperation with Korea?
The decision by the United States is truly regrettable and will have a significant impact on the international community, first and foremost for recipient countries, but also for donors. In light of this trend, I believe that partners such as Europe, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia, Canada and New Zealand need to work together to maintain balance. In particular, the Republic of Korea is a country with a strong commitment to expanding ODA, and it is a strategically important partner. France, with its expertise and financial resources, is also ready to collaborate.

Q France’s ODA is well known for its focus on Africa, but regarding Green ODA, the distribution between Asia and Africa is similar. Is there a particular reason for this?
Yes, it is very simple. If we look at regions with high greenhouse gas emissions and places with significant potential for emission reduction, the answer becomes clear. Considering the development speed of Asian countries, emissions in Asia as a whole could increase significantly in the next 10 years. That’s why we are investing more climate finance in Asia.

Q Do you think Korean green technology companies can also participate in France’s ODA projects?
Of course. France’s ODA follows the non-binding principle. No specific company is given preferential treatment, and all projects are carried out through open bidding. In addition to French companies, those from countries such as the Republic of Korea, Japan, and the United States can also participate. In fact, companies of different nationalities are already involved.

Q Some countries, including the United States, argue that ODA budgets should be reduced. What is France’s perspective on this?
I think we need to take a broader and more balanced perspective. In France, parliamentary oversight is sovereign and Parliament decides the budget allocation. This budget is significant because it is used to encourage partner countries to choose carbon-neutral pathways, but also because lawmakers understand that French ODA serves French foreign policy interests.
ODA is not just aid, but a strategic tool that can lead to long-term trade and investment opportunities for France and for our partners. This can be easily understood by looking at examples like Senegal who is a major partner for France in Western Africa.

Q How do you convince people who are skeptical about ODA?
We publish annual reports in various fields from multiple ministries and actively engage with the public through social media and various language channels. Even though it takes time, this kind of communication will gradually build trust with the public, much like a snowball effect. In addition, we consistently engage with members of parliament and senators, making efforts to explain how our activities are connected to foreign policy and national development. Finally, we strive to show how ODA serves our foreign policy objectives: without green ODA, the Paris Agreement is just a sheet of paper! K

Latest issues at a glance

KOICA NEWS

January



Launch of the first bilateral cooperation project with India
Korea and India signed their first bilateral exchange of notes for the KOICA India TVET Mechatronics Project in a ceremony at the Ministry of Finance in New Delhi on January 20 (local time). The project was developed in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
This agreement includes ▲guaranteeing activities in India for personnel dispatched in relation to the business, ▲tax-free customs clearance, and ▲recognition of immunity. Through this project, KOICA will support the training of the technical workforce required to develop India’s manufacturing industry. In particular, by piloting the introduction of a mechatronics engineering in secondary vocational technical education, KOICA aims to ultimately share Korea’s Meister High School model with India.
In the future, KOICA plans to explore ways to cooperate in creating sustainable development and mutually beneficial outcomes, such as establishing an associate degree program at India’s National Institute of Technology and considering the development of vocational training center projects in the shipbuilding and port sectors.



The first “Youth-Focused Project Volunteers” dispatched
KOICA dispatched the ‘Youth Focused Project Volunteers’ for the first time on January 25, lowering the threshold for young people to participate in overseas volunteer work and strengthening work experience opportunities. This volunteer program is a new initiative reorganized into a dual form by adding project volunteers to the existing long-term volunteers.
Existing long-term volunteers were selected based on their professional skills and certifications, and deployed for more than a year. In comparison, requirements for the ‘2024 Reorganized KOICA Project Volunteers’ were significantly relaxed, while the activity period was shortened to a maximum five months. It allowed even university students to participate without taking an extended leave of absence. Another difference is that assigned tasks are performed collaboratively and evaluated on a “team basis” rather than individually. The first Project Volunteers dispatched this time will be sequentially sent to a total of eight countries, including Paraguay, Uzbekistan, and Rwanda, and will carry out volunteer work in fields such as general education, international development, regional development, and health and medical care.



KOICA wins Grand Prize at the 2024 Korea ESG Management Innovation Awards
KOICA won the Grand Prize in the Social (S) category at the 2024 Korea ESG Management Innovation Awards. KOICA was recognized for its accomplishments in job creation and shared growth in the previous year, winning the Korea ESG Management Innovation Awards for the straight year. KOICA created a total of 13,000 jobs in 2023 in accordance with the “2021-2025 Job Creation Strategy.” This represents an 11% increase year-on-year. In addition, special case clauses under the “Basic Livelihood Security Act” have been established, expanding access for vulnerable groups to work as overseas volunteers while maintaining basic livelihood security qualifications. In terms of shared growth, the amount of orders received by small and medium-sized businesses in 2023 increased by 42%, and that of coexistence payments rose by 31% compared to the previous year. In addition, overseas sales support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with innovative products was expanded by 573%, contributing to $2.12 million worth of ODA project orders for SMEs in collaboration with KOICA.

Revision of 54 internal regulations from the “people’s perspective”
In order to systematically manage the ODA project and reduce the inconvenience to citizens participating in the project, KOICA has conducted a comprehensive review and revision of the internal regulations for project management from the “people’s perspective.” The revision was implemented targeting a total of 54 business management internal regulations for the promotion of ODA projects under the 「Framework Act on International Development Cooperation」 and the 「Korea International Cooperation Agency Act」, with the aim of achieving ▲ consistency between regulations ▲ compliance with laws and regulations ▲ regulation relaxation and system improvement.
KOICA has integrated the standards for the calculation, payment, and settlement of ODA project costs into a single set of regulations and abolished internal regulations that conflict with higher laws in order to improve the convenience of project participants. KOICA has also made substantial system improvements, including increasing the direct labor costs of experts every year and improving the working environment and welfare of overseas office interns (Young Professionals, YP) and Youth Mid-Term Volunteers. Detailed information on the revised Internal Regulations can be found on the KOICA Korean website(www.koica.go.kr).

February



100 youth volunteers sent to Uganda

In February, KOICA launched the "IT Capacity Building Project for Improving Local Government Project Performance Management" in the Mpigi and Mityana regions of central Uganda, deploying youth volunteers to support the initiative. The "2024 Reorganized KOICA Project Volunteers" dispatched this time will form teams to plan and implement projects aimed at addressing global challenges. In particular, this volunteer program is expected to serve as a catalyst for the successful implementation of country-specific cooperative projects, as it is linked to the "Capacity Building Project for Sustainable Rural Development in Uganda" being promoted by the KOICA Uganda Office.



KOICA receives top rating in data-based administration for 3rd consecutive year

KOICA was selected as an "Excellent" institution—the highest rating—for the third consecutive year in the "2024 Evaluation of Actual Conditions of Data-Based Administration," organized by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. In this evaluation, KOICA scored 97 points, well above the average score of 59.5 points among the surveyed institutions. KOICA received excellent evaluations across all management-based assessment areas, including ▲identifying data analysis projects and policy utilization, ▲joint data utilization achievements, ▲data capacity and culture, and ▲operation of dedicated departments. In particular, KOICA was recognized for its efforts to create a data-driven work culture by implementing systematic competency assessments for its staff to provide customized data training based on job level and competencies, sharing best practices in data analysis and policy, and producing guides for data analysis utilization.



KOICA and the Korea Institute for Advancement of Technology sign MOU

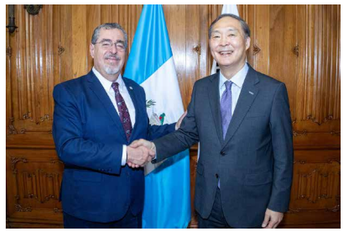
On February 14, KOICA signed an MOU with the Korea Institute for Advancement of Technology (KIAT) at the KOICA headquarters in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, to collaborate on grant-based ODA in the fields of technology, environment, and energy in developing countries. This agreement was signed to enhance the performance and quality of grant-based ODA projects in the fields of technology, environment, and energy by leveraging the expertise and networks of both institutions, effectively responding to the industrial development and green energy transition needs of developing countries. The agreement covers ▲identifying, implementing, and evaluating grant-based ODA projects in technology, environment, and energy; ▲promoting knowledge exchange that reflects the expertise of both institutions; and ▲collaborating on research, information sharing, and public relations for the development of both institutions. In particular, the two organizations plan to explore opportunities for cooperation in areas such as ▲technical cooperation (including support for international standardization technologies), ▲training of industrial talent (in shipbuilding and textiles), and ▲creation of innovative rural communities.



Promoting K-Innovation Technology at The First Cambodia EdTech Summit'

On February 17-18, KOICA introduced the Korean government's grant-based development cooperation projects in digital education and showcased Korean companies with innovative EdTech technologies at the "First Cambodia EdTech Summit," held at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia.
At this event, KOICA introduced the Korean government's ODA projects in the digital education sector through a welcoming speech by Choi Moon-jung, the country director of the KOICA Cambodia Office, participation in panel discussions, and the operation of promotional booths. KOICA also promoted three Korean EdTech companies (EMCAST Co., Ltd., VISANG Co., Ltd., and Enuma Korea) that participate in its flagship corporate collaboration initiative, the Inclusive Business Solution (IBS).

March



KOICA President CHANG Won Sam Visits Four Latin American Countries

KOICA President CHANG Won Sam visited Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru from March 2 to 13, where he discussed development cooperation strategies with government officials and monitored ODA project sites. In Mexico, he discussed triangular cooperation and the strengthening of development cooperation with the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and asked to participate in the MIKTA meeting. In Guatemala, he met with President Bernardo Arévalo to discuss economic development and infrastructure cooperation and shared South Korea's development experiences.
In Colombia, CHANG held discussions with the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC) to negotiate a framework agreement on grant aid and explored strategies for triangular cooperation. In Peru, he visited KOICA's waste management project site and signed a record of discussion for the Strengthening the Migration Services project of the National Superintendence of Migration. KOICA plans to establish a tailored ODA strategy for the Latin American region based on President CHANG's visit. It also aims to expand the scope of development cooperation to include the Central America and Caribbean regions.



Successful hosting of Development Cooperation Participation Strategy Briefing

On March 11, KOICA successfully held the "2025 Development Cooperation Participation Strategy Briefing" at the KBIZ Hall of the Small and Medium Business Association in Yeouido, Seoul, with over 300 attendees from businesses and related organizations. The first part, under the theme "Participation Strategies for Korean ODA Grant and Loan Development Cooperation Projects", featured the following presentations: ▲Participation Strategies for KOICA's ODA Procurement and 2025 Procurement Plan ▲Participation Strategies for KOICA's Business Cooperation Program Competitions ▲Participation Strategies for the Export-Import Bank of Korea's Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) ODA Procurement Projects. In the second part, under the theme "Global ODA Expansion Strategies and Best Practices," the following presentations were made: ▲Global ODA Business Expansion Strategy and the Korean Trust Fund of the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) ▲Participation Strategy for the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) Projects ▲Successful Case Studies of Korean Companies Expanding Overseas through Participation in Global ODA Projects.



Launch of Educational Environment Innovation at Makerere University in Uganda in partnership with the Export-Import Bank of Korea

On February 28, KOICA held the launch ceremony for the "Project on Promoting ICT Education Environment" at Makerere University in Uganda. This project is an ODA initiative in which KOICA will invest a total of $12.2 million from 2023 to 2028 to support the digital transformation of higher education in Uganda and enhance remote education capabilities. This project is particularly significant as it is being carried out in collaboration with the Export-Import Bank of Korea, which is responsible for providing loan assistance. The Export-Import Bank will provide a loan of approximately $162 million from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) to improve education environment at Makerere University in Uganda. KOICA will focus on software to strengthen digital education and remote education capabilities, while the EDCF will take responsibility for infrastructure through loan assistance, with each organization sharing specific roles. Through this, a combined synergy of both grant aid and loan assistance is expected to be achieved.



Web Drama awarded "Winner" in the Digital Advertising & Campaign Category at the 2024 A.N.D Awards

KOICA's web drama "The Development Couple" won the "Winner" in the Digital Advertising & Campaign category at the 2024 A.N.D Awards. The two-episode web drama, released by KOICA last October, is a romantic comedy built on humorous scenes arising from differing interpretations of "development" between a man working in the IT and a woman in international development cooperation Within a week of its release, it garnered 1.75 million views on social media platforms (YouTube, Instagram). The Development Couple has been praised for promoting the work of KOICA and its missions through the new format of a web drama.

April-May



Cambodia soars as aviation education power with ‘K-wings’

The Korean government will transfer its “K-Aviation Education” expertise to Cambodia to help the development of the aviation industry lead to tangible economic benefits, such as job creation. Following the opening of new airports in Siem Reap in 2023 and Koh Kong in 2024, and with the launch of the new Phnom Penh airport scheduled for the end of this year, Cambodia is focusing on expanding its aviation infrastructure, and this support is aimed at helping the country further strengthen its expertise in the field.

KOICA plans to invest $12 million (approximately 16.5 billion Korean won) over the next five years to strengthen the expertise and competitiveness of the National Institute of Civil Aviation, an organization under the Cambodia State Secretariat of Civil Aviation that trains aviation professionals such as air traffic controllers and airport operations personnel, and also to support its growth into a global aviation education hub. Specifically, the support will include the following: ▲Consulting for ICAO TrainAIR Plus certification and development of training courses ▲Strengthening the capabilities of administrators and instructors ▲Construction of new buildings and renovation of existing buildings ▲Provision of practical training equipment and aviation security programs

KOICA receives ‘Best’ rating for public data provision and management for 6th consecutive year

KOICA was selected as the most outstanding institution for the sixth consecutive year in the 2024 Public Data Provision and Management Status Evaluation, organized by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. This year, 679 institutions, including central government agencies, were evaluated across three areas and eleven indicators. KOICA scored a total of 96.29 points, receiving consistently high marks across three areas: ▲Systematic management of open data, ▲Efforts to enhance the utilization of public data, and ▲Quality management of retained data, significantly exceeding the average score of 63 points for all evaluated institutions.

In particular, KOICA’s efforts to promote public data utilization – including hosting a private briefing to share best practices in data use, conducting in-depth interviews with experienced data users, and organizing a public data utilization contest – were recognized. KOICA is working to ensure that data related to international development cooperation ODA projects worth 2 trillion won annually is easily accessible and usable by the Korean public and businesses.



KOICA signs deal with the Public Procurement Service to expand the base of the ODA procurement market

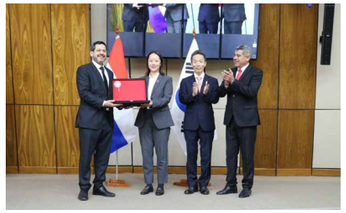
KOICA and the Public Procurement Service will continue their collaboration in expanding the domestic ODA procurement market. KOICA signed an MOU with the Public Procurement Service at KOICA’s headquarters in Seongnam to cooperate on the transition to the next-generation Korea ON-line E-Procurement System and to expand the range of government procurement items eligible for participation in ODA projects. The renewed MOU includes plans to further enhance collaboration by actively utilizing the capabilities of both institutions, such as: ▲Collaboration on the transition to the next-generation Korea ON-line E-Procurement System ▲Expansion of government procurement products for participation in ODA projects (adding cultural items) ▲Establishment of an ODA Goods Mall within the Innovation Marketplace and the introduction of a development cooperation field within the Public Procurement Service evaluation committee ▲Mutual cooperation to enhance KOICA’s expertise in technology evaluation.



KOICA selected as ‘Best’ in the Public Institution Win-Win Growth Evaluation for 2nd straight year

KOICA achieved the ‘Best’ grade for the second straight year in the 2024 Win-Win Growth Evaluation, conducted by the Ministry of SMEs and Startups, which evaluated 134 public institutions. KOICA established a win-win growth promotion plan and actively utilized its network of 47 overseas offices and domestic connections to support the overseas expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In addition, KOICA established a win-win cooperation fund of 940 million won, a 20% increase from the previous year, and has been implementing various support programs, including the establishment of smart factories. KOICA also strengthened its collaboration with local governments and key public institutions to expand opportunities for regional companies and expanded the preferential system for SMEs to participate in ODA projects.

In particular, through the “Export-Led Innovative Product Pilot Purchase Support Program,” KOICA supported the overseas demonstration of products, providing learning devices for the visually impaired, throw-type fire extinguishers, and more to 19 countries, including Jordan and Mozambique, resulting in a total export worth $2.3 million.



Paraguay Office receives commendation from the Paraguayan National Congress

On April 22 (local time), the KOICA Paraguay Office, celebrating its 30th anniversary, received the “Las Residentas” commendation from the Paraguayan National Congress in recognition of its contributions to national development. KOICA began its cooperation with Paraguay in 1993 with a rural water supply project. In 1995, the KOICA Paraguay Office was officially established. Since then, KOICA has designated Paraguay as a key partner country in Latin America and has provided a total of $182.26 million (approximately 211.6 billion won) in support to date. In addition, over the past 30 years, KOICA has dispatched 1,218 volunteers to more than 300 institutions and has operated training programs to share Korea’s technology and systems with Paraguayan officials and professionals. Recently, KOICA has been expanding its cooperation into the field of digital partnership, combining the needs of the Paraguayan government with Korea’s strengths. In particular, by modernizing public administration and improving digital accessibility, KOICA is paving the way for mutual growth.



‘Industrial Talent Development’ in Vietnam’s welding for shipbuilding produces 1st graduates

On April 25 (local time), KOICA held a graduation ceremony for the “Welding for Shipbuilding Industry Talent Development Program” at the Korea-Vietnam Industrial Technology College in Nghê An Province, Vietnam, producing 53 skilled graduates. KOICA is nurturing talent by establishing a technical school through the “Vocational Education and Training Support Project for Employment of Vulnerable Groups and Youth in Areas Severely Affected by the Vietnam War (2023-2029, $12 million).” For this project, KOICA formed a consortium with three HD Hyundai Heavy Industries affiliates (HD Hyundai Heavy Industries, HD Hyundai Mipo, and HD Hyundai Samho), as well as Ulsan Metropolitan City and the University of Ulsan. Korean experts in welding for shipbuilding have been dispatched to the Korea-Vietnam Industrial Technology College in Nghe An Province, Vietnam, where they will train a total of 440 people over three years until 2027. Local technical instructors receive training in Korea, and graduates have opportunities to find employment in shipbuilding-related industries both in Korea and abroad. Based on the success of this pilot project, KOICA plans to expand the program to other partner countries, such as Uzbekistan and Cambodia.



Opening of the Integrated Rehabilitation Center in Palestine

On May 6 (local time), KOICA opened rehabilitation centers in two cities - Ramallah and Qabatiya - in the West Bank of Palestine. These are the first integrated rehabilitation centers in the West Bank to address a wide range of disabilities, including physical, emotional, and speech impairments.

The rehabilitation centers are equipped with occupational therapy rooms, physical therapy rooms, speech therapy rooms, and mental health counseling rooms. They also feature modern facilities such as a VR-based gait and balance training system and 3D interactive devices used for cognitive rehabilitation. The opening of these rehabilitation centers is one of the outcomes of the “Establishment of Public Rehabilitation Outpatient Care Centres and Capacity Building of Human Resources in the West Bank, the State of Palestine,” which KOICA has been implementing in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) since 2021.



‘Safety in Field’ training for KDRT prospective members conducted with UNHCR

From April 21 to 25 (local time), KOICA, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), conducted “Safety in Field” training for Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT) prospective members in Hua Hin, Thailand.

The recent training, attended by 22 KDRT prospective members affiliated with KOICA, the National Medical Center, and the Korea Foundation for International Healthcare, focused on enhancing safety knowledge and strengthening the emergency response capabilities required at humanitarian disaster sites.

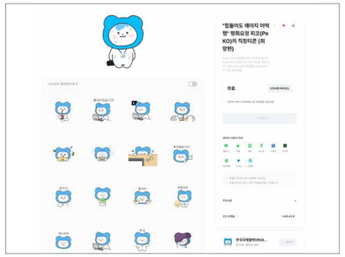
Heo Jin-bok, assistant manager of the KOICA Emergency Response Team and a KDRT prospective member, said, “This training was especially meaningful because it was conducted in a hands-on manner in an unfamiliar foreign environment, allowing us to experience effective ways to respond to various emergency situations we may encounter during actual deployments.”

June



RMNCH and Nutrition Training Center open in northern Laos

On June 3, the RMNCH (Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health) and Nutrition Training Center opened at Luang Namtha Provincial Hospital in northern Laos. This center is the first and only specialized nutrition training facility in northern Laos, providing comprehensive services such as integrated management of acute malnutrition, breastfeeding and nutrition counseling, and training for midwives and healthcare workers. Luang Namtha Province, where the center is located, has a minority population rate of 72.2%, more than twice the national average of 34.2%. The region is densely populated by vulnerable groups with limited access to healthcare due to diverse cultural and linguistic differences. Accordingly, KOICA has been implementing this project with the goal of establishing an inclusive healthcare system that covers the underprivileged, such as women, ethnic minorities, and residents of mountainous areas, in order to improve access to maternal and child health services. In particular, the project contributes to reducing infant and child mortality rates, maternal mortality ratios, and child malnutrition through activities such as training midwives, providing maternal and child health and nutrition education, and implementing community-based nutrition outreach programs.



24 New 'THE PeKO' sticker set distributed for free

KOICA has created 24 new stickers featuring the unique "harmless charm" of the communication character PeKO, and is distributing them for free as Naver Sticker set through the Naver OGQ Market starting June 26 (download link: https://naver.me/FNIjURSX). This is the second release, following the first set titled "Peace Fairy PeKO's Everyday," which was launched in 2023 and featured 24 different daily situations and emotions. The new set of stickers, titled "Peace Fairy PeKO's Workplace: Even If It's Tough, I Have to Do It (Hope Edition)," features PeKO as an eternally positive and passionate office worker. By humorously depicting situations and emotions commonly encountered in the workplace and daily life, these stickers can be used by office workers and by a wide range of users alike. PeKO sticker set can be freely used on Naver services linked with the OGQ Market, such as Naver Blog and Cafe, and can be downloaded for free by searching for "PeKO" or "KOICA." In addition, by registering as a fan of the KOICA account, you can be the first to receive newly updated stickers in the future.



WFK KOICA - Project Volunteers First Batch Activity Results Presentation Held

KOICA held the "WFK KOICA – Project Volunteers First Batch Activity Results Presentation" at its headquarters on June 4. This event was held for eight teams (a total of 87 members) from the WFK KOICA – Project Volunteers First Batch who returned after completing overseas volunteer work in eight developing countries—including Paraguay, Cambodia, and Rwanda—from December 2024 to April 2025. The teams shared their activity results and discussed ways to further improve the program. The returning volunteers all agreed that their four months of overseas service was a valuable experience that helped them build teamwork and confidence. KOICA also plans to launch nine newly developed Project Volunteer initiatives this year in countries such as the Dominican Republic, Rwanda, and Mongolia. Recruitment for the 4th batch of 2025 WFK KOICA – Project Volunteers will begin in early July, and related information will be available on the WFK-KOV website (kov.koica.go.kr).



KOICA-UN AI for Climate Action Awards

KOICA, together with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is hosting the "AI for Climate Action Awards (AICA Awards)," an international competition for AI technologies to support climate change response in developing countries. The AICA Awards are an international competition that unearths innovative solutions using AI technology to address climate change, aiming to identify practical and sustainable open-source solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This awards program seeks innovative AI solutions that can be applied to urgent climate change response sectors such as agriculture, energy, water, waste, and early warning systems. Anyone aged 18 or older, whether as individuals or a group, can participate regardless of nationality. Applications are open until July 31, and the final winner will be selected through three rounds of judging by September. More information about the awards is available on the official AICA Awards website (aica.awardsplatform.com) or by scanning the QR code on the official poster.

KOICA and Central Asia: Continuing Cooperation, Strengthening Partnership

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the 7th volume of MAGAZINE KOICA. Our new issue spotlights Central Asia, a region that carries on the splendid legacy of the Silk Road civilizations and is leaping forward to a new future together with Korea. It holds tremendous development potential, being rich in natural resources such as gold and uranium and home to a youthful under-30 population that comprises half of its inhabitants. Located in the heart of Eurasia - linking Europe and Asia, with Russia to the north and India to the south — Central Asia occupies a region of geopolitical significance.

The bond between Korea and Central Asia runs deep. Notably, some 300,000 Koryoin ethnic Koreans have settled in this region, preserving their heritage and identity across generations. Korea began our diplomatic relations and journey to shared growth with the five Central Asian countries in the early 1990s, following their independence from the former Soviet Union. In 2024, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations, marking an important milestone.

Against the backdrop of our longstanding friendship, KOICA has helped cultivate sustainable development in the region by identifying various development cooperation projects centered on people, growth, and sustainability. We have collaborated in diverse fields including fostering technical talent, healthcare and medicine, strengthening digital administrative capacity, enhancing lives through the supply of electricity, and response to climate change. Through vivid stories from the scene featured in this volume, I hope you will envision a future of shared prosperity jointly shaped by Korea and Central Asia.

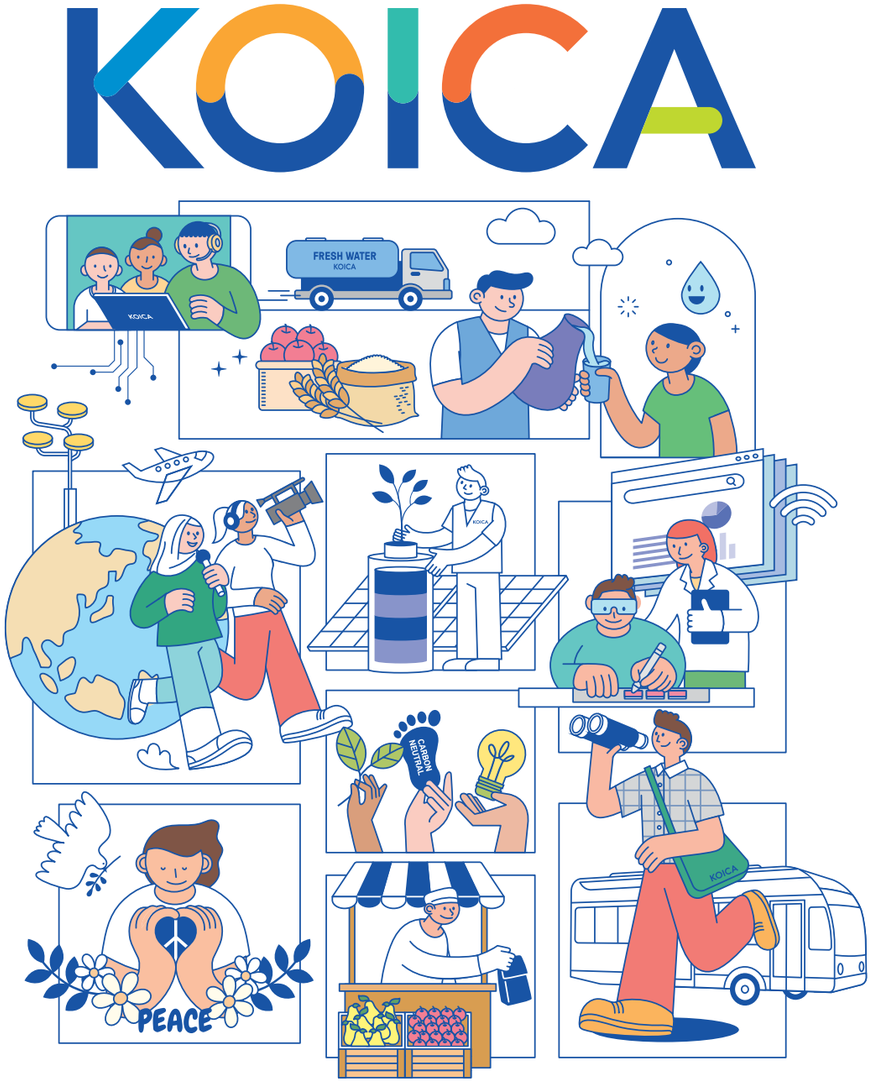
Even as the global trend toward nationalism intensifies, many countries are engaging in efforts to build mutual and friendly cooperative relations. Going forward, KOICA will remain committed to realizing the values of co-prosperity and inclusiveness, striving to build a foundation of cooperation for shared growth with diverse partner countries.

President of KOICA

장원삼

CHANG, Won Sam

FINDING GOIKHA



KOICA is a Better Tomorrow

KOICA, Korea's representative agency for development cooperation, creates a world where everyone can dream of a happy future through inclusive and win-win partnerships, leaving no one behind, and implements developed-country-style ODA projects.

KOICA

Date of registration August 29th, 2025
Publishing registration number 2025-03-129
Date of publication August 29th, 2025

Publishing organization Korea International Cooperation Agency
Address 825 Daewangpangyo-ro, Sujeong-gu, Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, Republic **of Korea**
Tel 1588-0434
Fax 031-740-0260
Website www.koica.go.kr

Planning·Editing KOICA Department of Media and Public Relations
Production CHOSUNNEWSPRESS
Print TARA TPS

MAGAZINE KOICA
2025 VOL.7

Download **MAGAZINE KOICA**

홍보자료
홍보 2025-03-129

Now you can also enjoy
MAGAZINE KOICA
through an AI-powered
audio magazine!