

Contact	Rachel Minjo Chun Spokesperson for Foreign Media	044-204-7104 rachelmchun@korea.kr
----------------	---	--------------------------------------

MSS is set to strengthen economic diplomacy to assist SMEs and startups in entering the global market

An MOU has been signed between MOFA and MSS to break down the inter-ministerial divide and focus policy capabilities on supporting SMEs and startups entering the overseas market.

The MOU includes establishing a consultative body to assist SMEs and startups at overseas diplomatic missions, utilizing diplomatic networks already established worldwide.

Sejong, April 5, 2024 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA, Minister CHO Tae-yul) and the Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS, Minister OH Youngju) signed an MOU on Monday, April 1, at Seohee Hall on the 18th floor of MOFA. The MOU aims to support SMEs and startups in expanding their global reach and enhancing their competitiveness.

As SMEs and startups have been driving the dynamism and innovation of Korea's economy, the two ministries recognized their pivotal role in economic diplomacy. Therefore, the two ministries decided to cooperate, focusing on combining MOFA's tangible and intangible global network with MSS's export and startup policies.

Minister CHO Tae-yul of Foreign Affairs stated, "After taking office, during my visits to various business associations and organizations, I was reminded once again of the pressing need for MOFA to establish tailored business support policies and provide on-site support services from overseas missions to assist Korean companies in expanding globally." He added, "To better realize economic diplomacy for the public, MOFA and MSS will join hands to support SMEs and startups entering the global markets, aiming to manifest tangible changes and results."

Minister OH Youngju of SMEs and Startups stated, "Our joint effort aims to provide support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups facing challenges overseas. We want to create a system that seamlessly integrates the strengths of various local and national organizations to address their concerns effectively. Our goal is to ensure that these businesses

do not have to worry about where to turn for help when they encounter difficulties." She added, "We look forward to working closely with MOFA to accelerate the globalization of SMEs and startups."

In addition, at the signing ceremony, an MOU between the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Korea Institute of Startup and Entrepreneurship Development (KISED) was also signed. This MOU details cooperation between the two ministries' entrepreneurship support policies and ODA.

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlines specific measures to support the growth of Korean small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and social startups. These measures include expanding their reach overseas and participating in official development assistance (ODA) activities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in developing countries.

Moving forward, both parties aim to create a network that links KOICA's innovative development cooperation programs with related programs, such as the private investment-led technology startup support project. This will lead to practical collaborative outcomes such as piloting joint projects, supporting companies' overseas expansion and ODA activities, and organizing events related to business cooperation.

The signing of the MOUs between MOFA and MSS and between their respective agencies is regarded as an opportunity to enhance the institutional foundation for inter-ministerial collaboration to address the challenges and policy needs of Korean SMEs and startups. It is also an opportunity to establish a practical support system to assist in their globalization.

Having gained momentum in inter-ministerial collaboration with the MOU, MOFA and MSS plan to enhance mutual cooperation to actively identify specific, demand-driven support projects that meet the needs of the field and Korean industries.